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2309 Middle Sound Loop • Middle Sound Loop • $3,325,000

Some of the best views in southeastern North Carolina can be found off Middle Sound Loop Road. As you pull up to the private gate and look down the long, winding driveway you immediately realize how special and private this 550' deep lot is. Loaded with a mature canopy of live oaks and an understory of sabal palms, this 1.3 acre property sits high on a bluff, is bulk headed and offers it's own private pier with a gazebo and 2 boat lifts.

14 & 18 E. Raleigh Street • Wrightsville Beach • $2,250,000

Oceanfront - Rare adjoining two lot combination (one ocean front and one second row) on one of Wrightsville Beach's most sought after streets. Each lot is 50' x 100' and together would allow up to 7,000 square foot structure. Alternatively, the lots could accommodate separate structures of up to 3500 square feet each.

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1605 Landfall Drive • Landfall • $1,250,000

Sited on a high waterfront bluff overlooking the intracoastal waterway, Wrightsville Beach and the iconic drawbridge in the distance, this Mediterranean inspired villa is move-in ready. The compact 2442 square feet offers an open floor plan with three bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths including a first floor master.

2227 Deepwood Drive • Landfall • $750,000

Overlooking the tranquil pond on Deepwood Drive, this quality built brick home features formal areas as well as an open kitchen/sunroom combination, a total of five bedrooms (including the master and two others on the first floor). New updates include roof, windows, appliances, water heaters and a well for irrigation.

2017 Northstar Place • Landfall • $649,900

Beautifully maintained executive home in LandfallL Open floor plan with cathedral ceilings. Large first floor master suite with separate sitting area and French doors leading to the private terrace with broken views of the Dye Lake. Hardwood floors, granite kitchen counter tops, updated fixtures with new hot water heater, 2 year old windows and a 7 year old roof. The 2 second floor bedrooms with en suite baths and a large FROG with room to add a bath. Great walk-in attic storage and room off garage that is conditioned.

2 Sunset Avenue B • Wrightsville Beach • $1,950,000

There is a good reason it's called Sunset Avenue! Only a few houses on the very southern end of Wrightsville Beach are right on the water and this is one of the best. Enjoy the top two floors of this 2500 square foot over/under duplex condominium with four bedrooms, 4 baths, private elevator, vaulted ceiling with beautiful tongue and groove cypress ceiling. A deep covered porch and upper walk-out balcony provide plenty of space for outdoor entertaining. There is parking for 4 cars (2 covered), a 50' boat slip, outdoor shower and large walk-in storage for all the beach gear.

7113 E. Creeks Edge Drive • Cove Point • $1,750,000

Overlooking the expansive waters of Hewlett's Creek, this stunning coastal design features tastefully designed 4800 sqft with covered porches providing an additional 1900 sqft of great outdoor entertaining areas. This 1 acre high bluff setting is out of the flood plain, shaded with beautiful live oaks and has been featured in Dawson's Creek multiple times.

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551 S. Lumina Avenue C-2 • Wrightsville beach • $1,200,000

What could be better than south end ocean front on Wrightsville Beach? How about including a gazebo and 22 foot boat slip on Banks Channel! This top floor corner unit at The Doak has been recently updated with new flooring, carpet and interior paint. Fully furnished with excellent rental history, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with granite/stainless kitchen and granite/tile baths.

1333 Regatta Drive • Landfall • $850,000

Open the heavy custom iron gates to the courtyard with cast stone pool and fountain and you will feel like you've entered a Tuscan treasure. The ingenious split garage design provides the perfect private entry with flanking gardens, travertine stone pavers and terra cotta barrel tile roof. Once inside, natural light sweeps through over-sized Palladian windows overlooking Landfall's Pete Dye golf course. This 4100 square foot villa offers 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, a vaulted 25' x 17' living room and a 18' x 13' study with library alcove

1208 Forest Island Place • Landfall • $429,000

Located on a short, quiet cul-de-sac, this ideal Landfall home site overlooks two ponds and is surrounded by some of Landfall prettiest houses. (Distant views of the Intracoastal Waterway and Wrightsville Beach) Build the home of your dreams on one of Landfall's most unique remaining lots.

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Fabulous 1+ acre homesite overlooking Landfall's Jack Nicklaus Golf Course (Marsh #1). With 243 feet of course frontage, this huge homesite provides an expansive footprint for a large house with pool if desired. Situated behind the green, you can catch all the action and enjoy a short walk to the Landfall Clubhouse (Membership optional).

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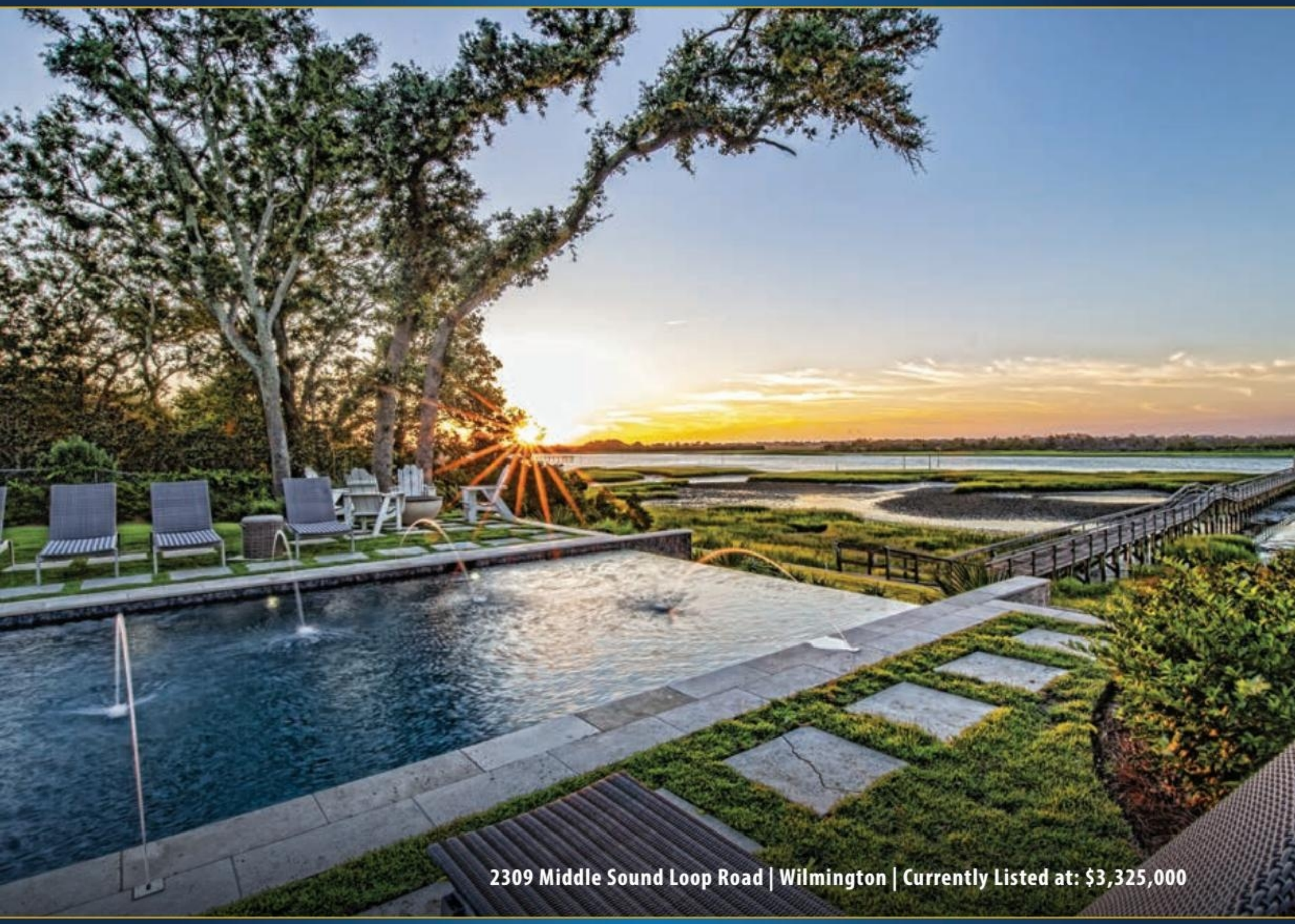

2309 Middle Sound Loop Road | Wilmington | Currently Listed at: $3,325,000

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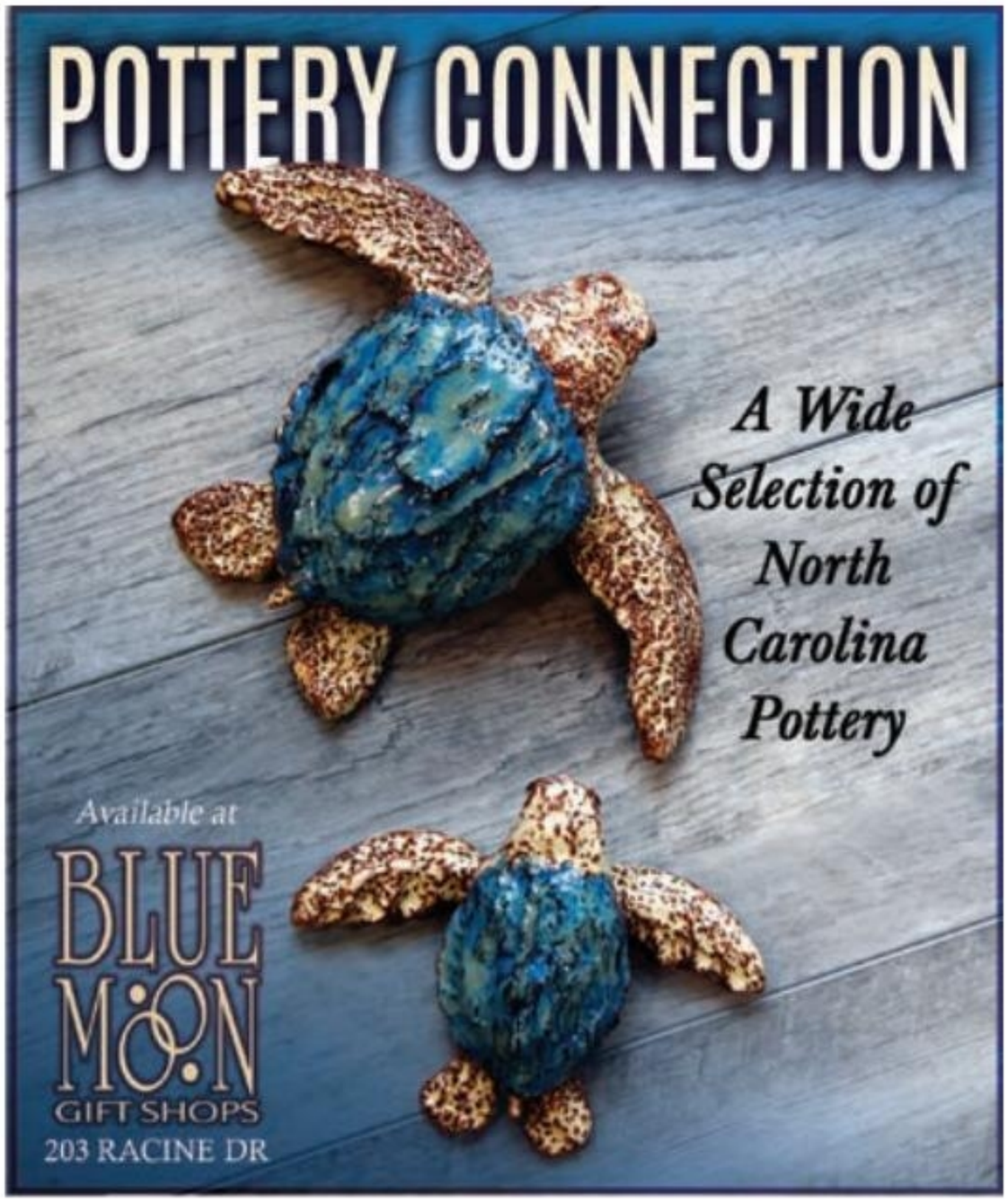
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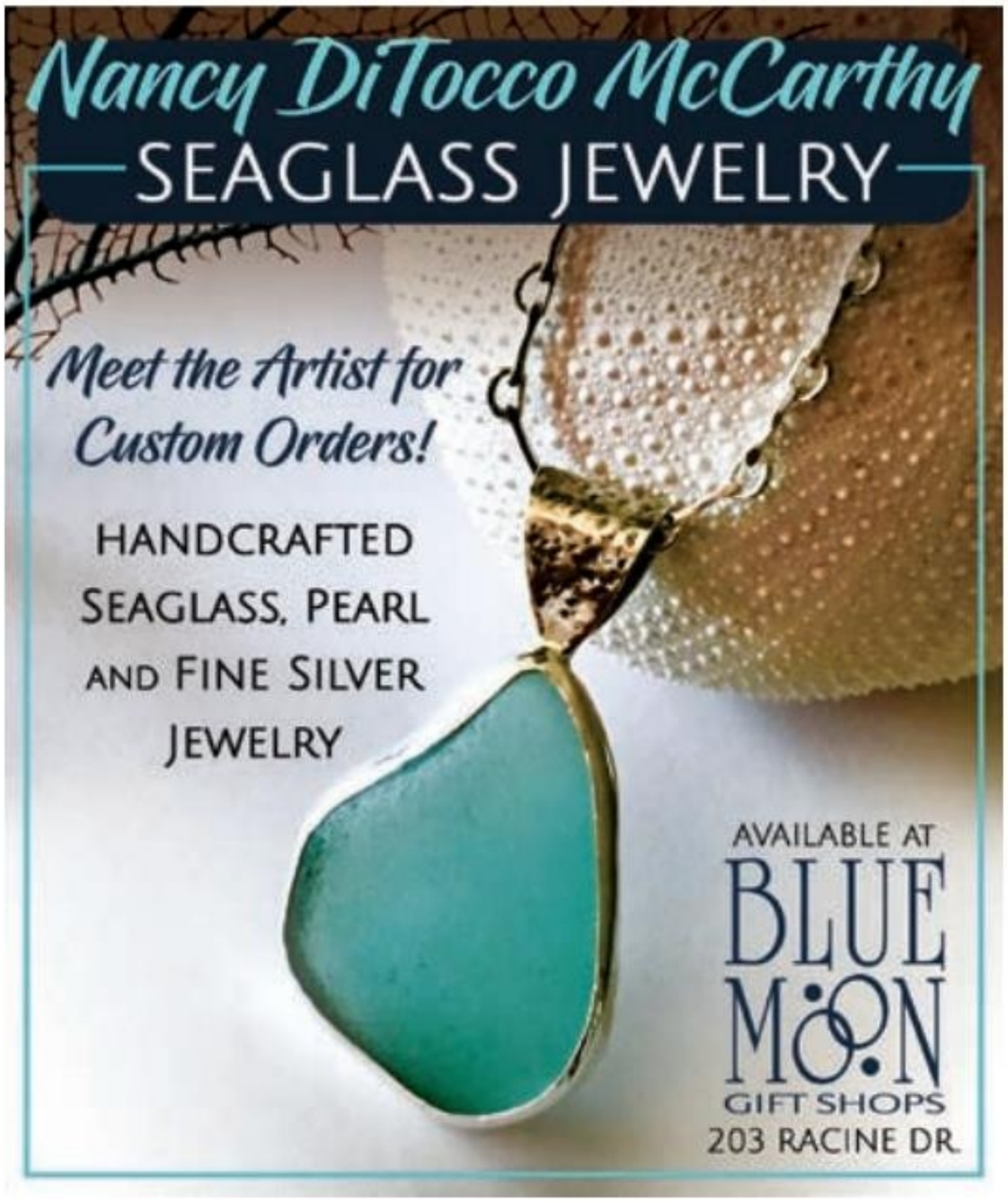
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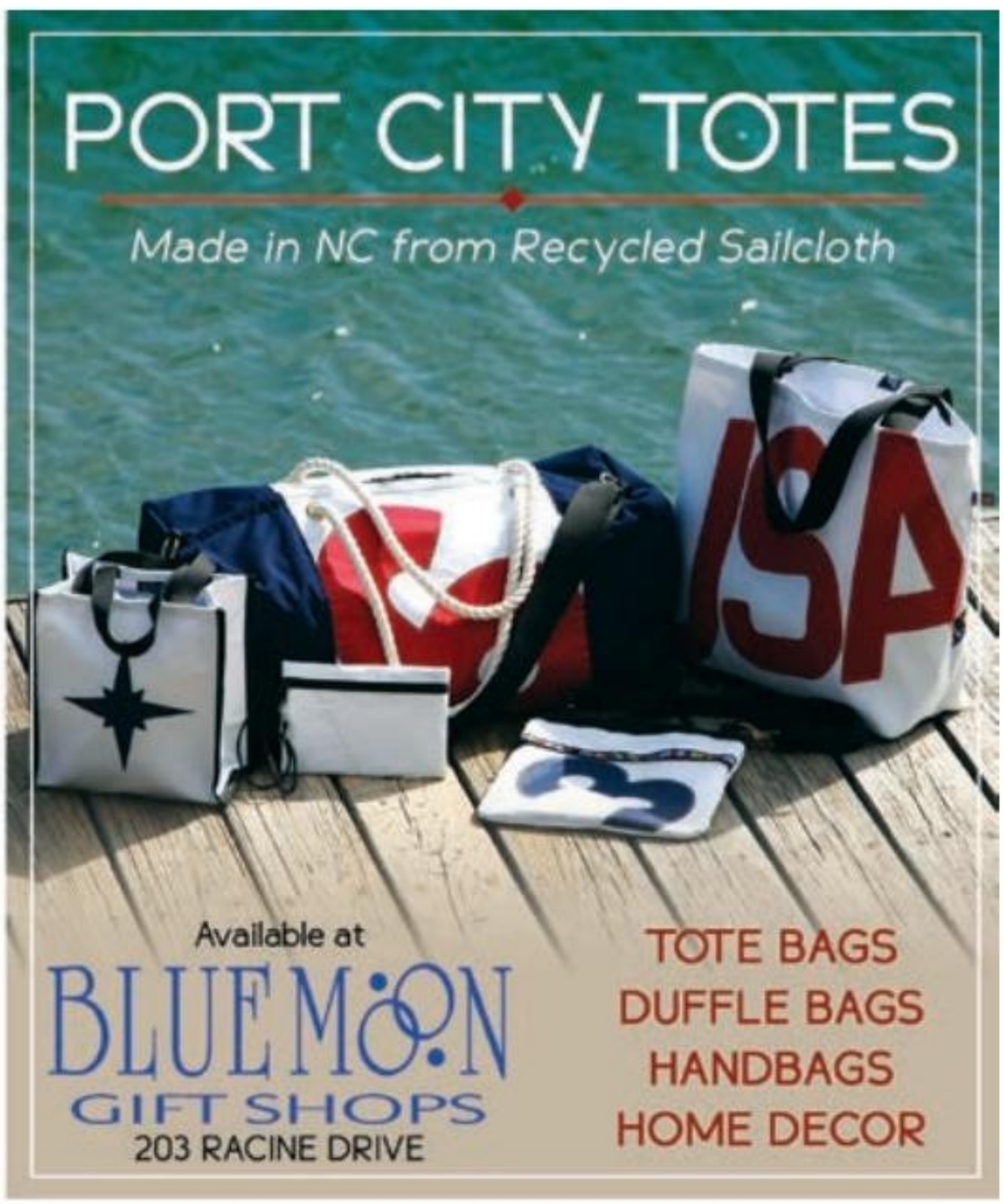
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The Reluctant Pilgrim

By Jim Dodson

Two decades ago, on the eve of the new millennium, the acclaimed Cambridge biologist Rupert Sheldrake was asked what single change in human behavior could make a better world.

Every tourist, he replied, should become a pilgrim.

Sheldrake earned the distinction of being the "world's most controversial scientist" because he rejected the conventional belief that nature and the universe can only be explained by scientific data.

His journey from atheism to an ever-expanding spiritual awareness and eventual embrace of his Christian heritage produced several fine books on the subject along the way, but it began with his simple curiosity about the common spiritual practices of the world's religious traditions, highlighted by pilgrimages that awakened and expanded his own evolving views of human consciousness.

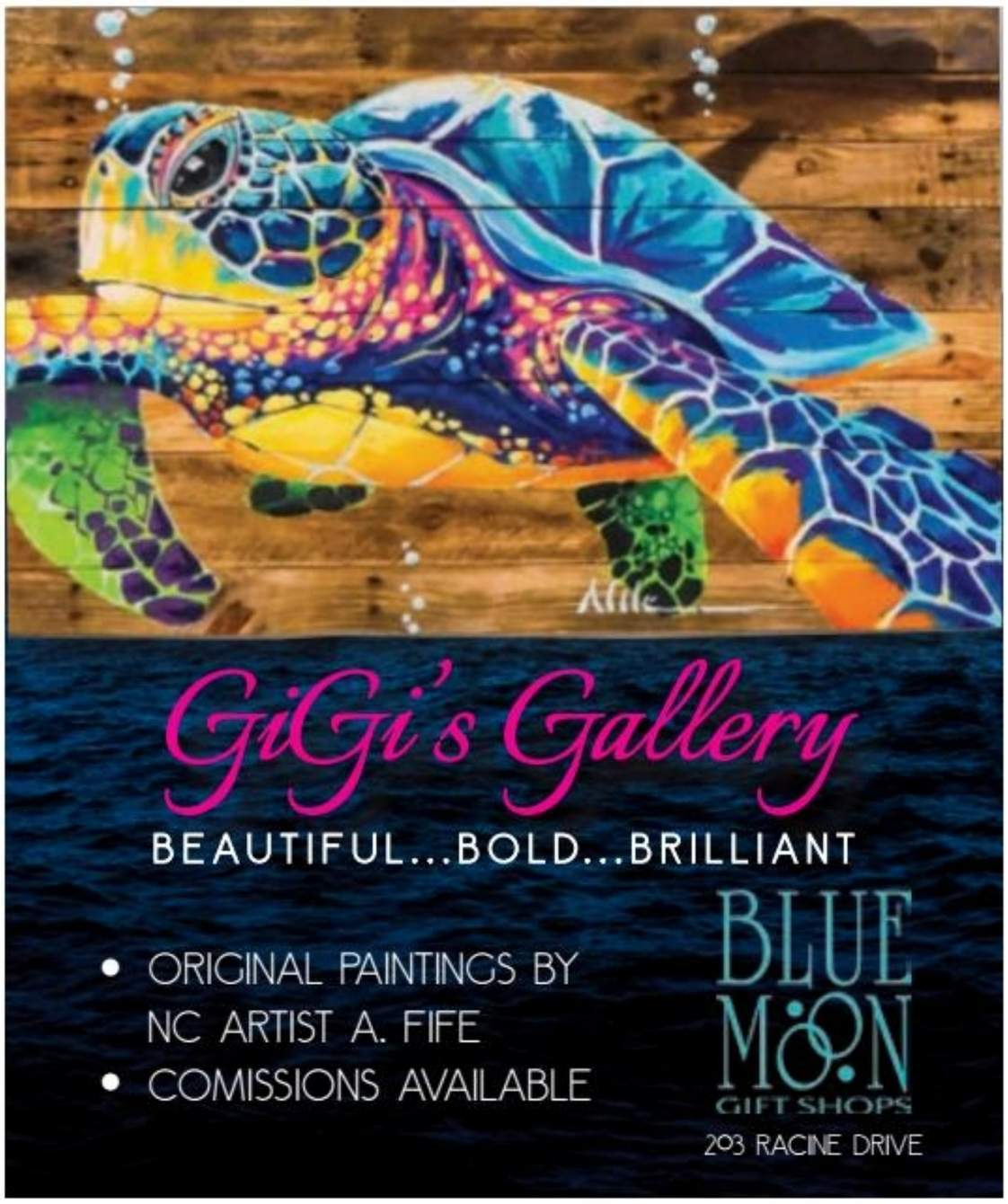
What Sheldrake was getting at, I think, was that a tourist travels the world in search of new experiences that provide superficial pleasure or delight, a material quest, if you will, that looks outward rather than probing inward.

A pilgrim, on the other hand, travels over unknown territory with an open mind and spirit willing to face any physical obstacle that arises, stepping out of the daily routine to deepen one's awareness of a divine presence and the journey within. Pilgrimages are as old and varied as the world's many religions, personal journeys that mean different things to every pilgrim.

Two decades ago, I took my dying father on a journey back to England and Scotland to play the golf courses where he learned to play the game as a lonely airman just before D-Day. Ours wasn't a conventional spiritual pilgrimage, I suppose, though in retrospect I see it as something akin. For 10 days we traveled and talked about his life and mine, leaving nothing unspoken between us, ushering his long journey to a beautiful close and enriching mine in ways I'm still counting up today.

A couple of years later, in the midst of an unexpected divorce, my young daughter, Maggie, and our elderly golden retriever spent an entire summer camping and fly-fishing our way to the fabled trout streams of the West. Like a couple of modern-day pilgrims from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* — or maybe a Hope-and-Crosby road movie — we went in search of new meaning and old rivers, lost the dog briefly in Yellowstone, blew up the truck in Oklahoma, saw soul-stirring countryside and met a host of colorful characters who made us laugh and cry, creating a bond my daughter and I share to this day.

When Maggie's little brother, Jack, asked to have his own mythic adventure, we took off the summer before 9/11 hoping to see every wonder of the Classical World. Owing to events in a suddenly unraveling planet, age-old conflicts in the Middle East, China and Africa, we only got as far as the island of Crete before turning for home. But traveling together through the ruins of a mythological world — following the footsteps of Homer and Herodotus, Marcus Aurelius and Aristotle — brought us both a deeper understanding of how we got here. Today, my son works as a documentary journalist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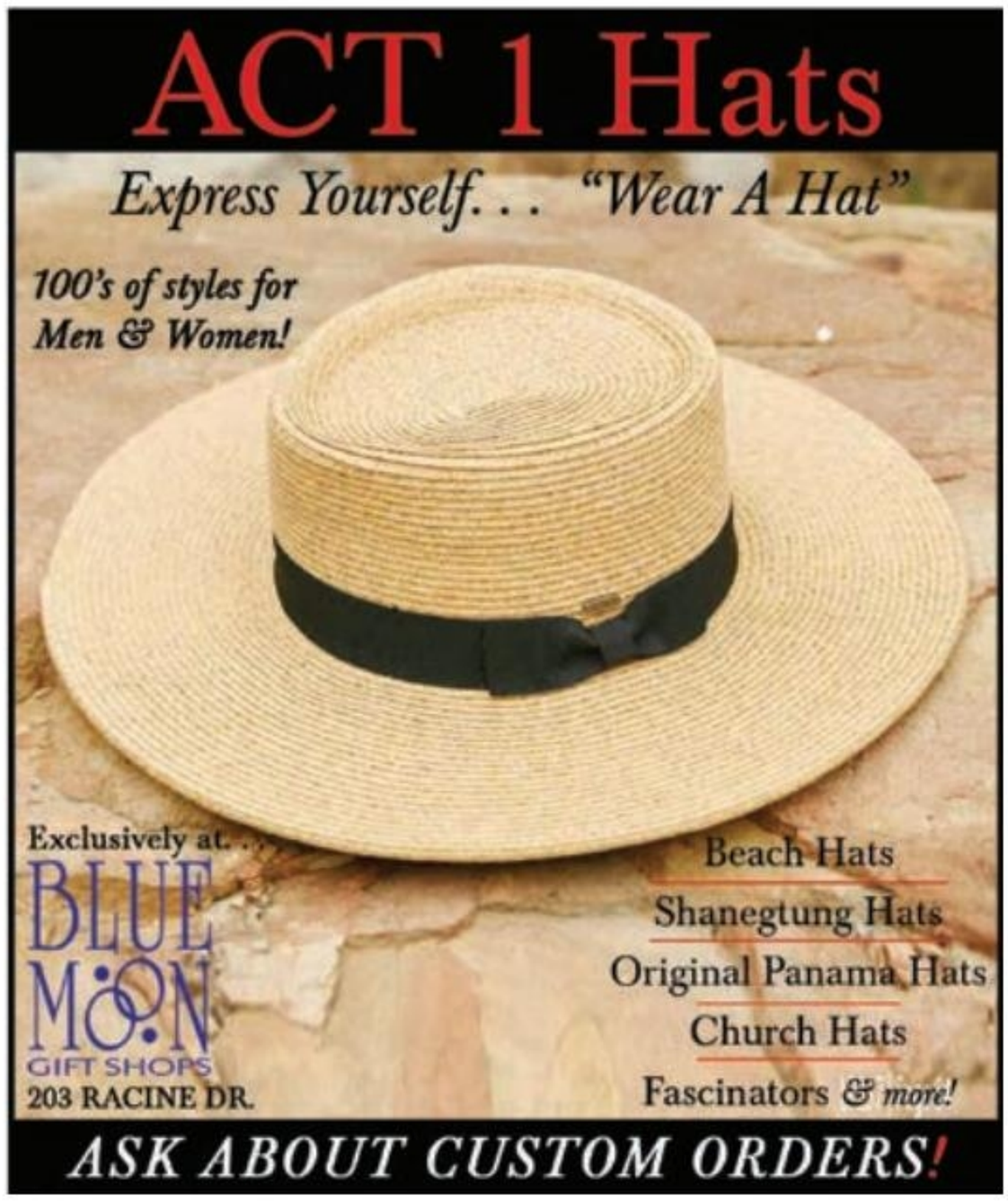
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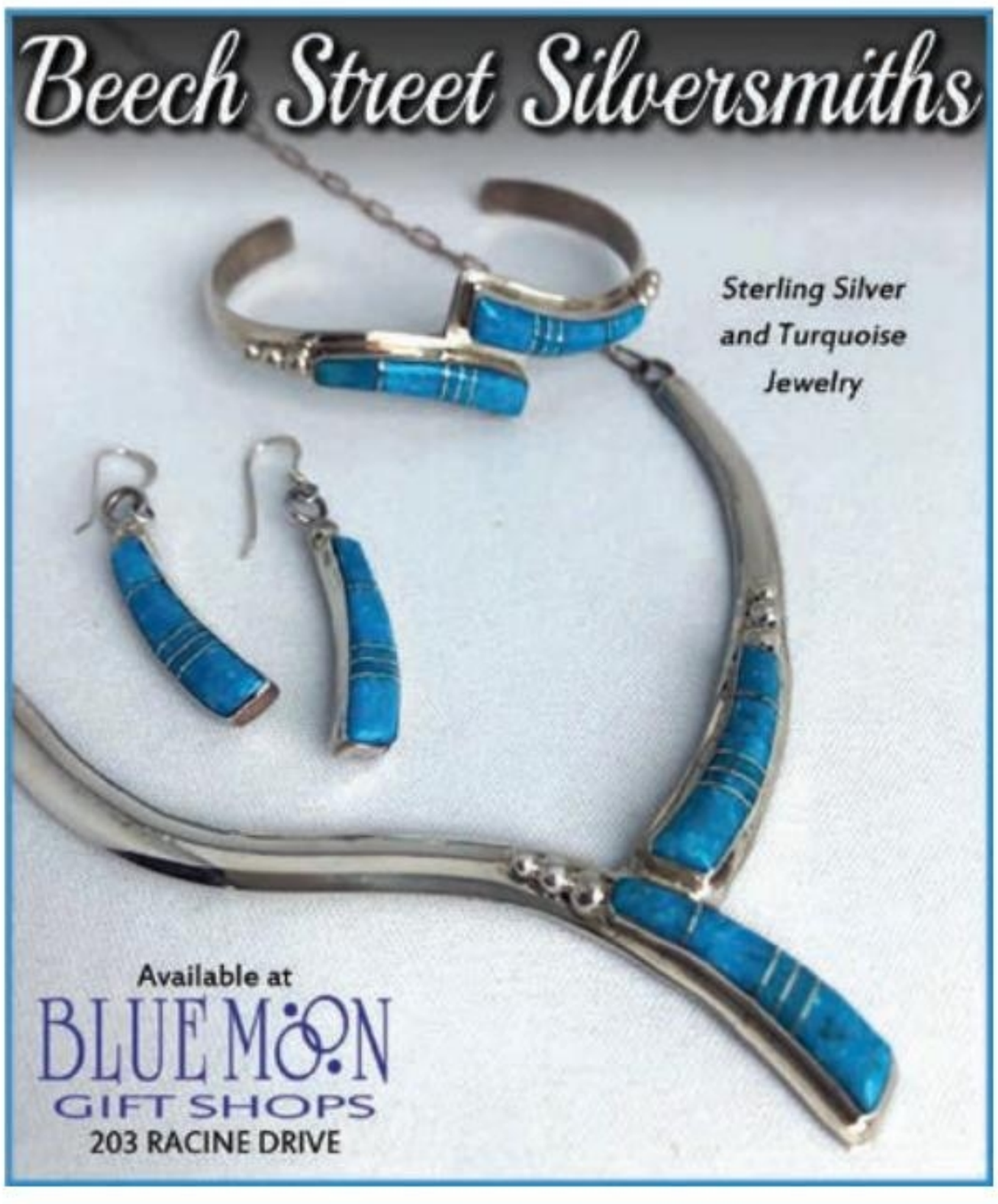
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in the Middle East, still trying to make sense of its age-old conflicts.

As it happens, I wrote books about these family adventures, which in my mind perfectly fit the definition of a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey over unknown ground that mystically leaves the traveler changed for the better.

Last August, my wife and I joined 30 other pilgrims from our Episcopal Church for a more traditional spiritual walk along the Via Francigena — the ancient pathway linking Canterbury to Rome. In Medieval times, Christian pilgrims traveled the long road to pay homage to the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul before catching ships to the Holy Land.

I'll confess, at first I was hesitant to go — a reluctant pilgrim who prefers to walk alone — or with only one or two others on such travels.

In a sense, my wife and I reversed this ancient tradition by making our first trip to the Holy Land weeks before our Tuscan walk to attend my son Jack's wedding to a lovely Palestinian gal he met in graduate school at Columbia University. The wedding festivities lasted several nights in Old Jaffa, the ancient port town next to Tel Aviv, where legend holds that Saint Peter received his vision to take Christianity to the gentiles of the Levant.

For the father of the groom, perhaps the most moving moment of this life-changing journey came on the morning of the ceremony when my wife, daughter and her fiancé Nathanial went for a swim on the beautiful beach that links the modern city of Tel Aviv to the ancient one of Jaffa. Afterward, following Arab tradition, I walked to the Char family patriarch's house to ask permission for his beautiful granddaughter to marry my son. Tannous, 77, smiled and gave his blessing and we shared an embrace as both familiess applauded and music broke out.

An hour or so later, the wedding took place at a stunning basilica on the bluffs over the Mediterranean Sea. The rooftop celebration went on well after midnight beneath a full summer moon, prompting my own bride and me to slip away and stand on Jaffa's famous Bridge of Wishes, where we quietly renewed our own wedding vows — for it was our wedding anniversary, too. As we walked home to bed through Jaffa's moonlit streets, I suddenly remembered that I'd left my watch on the beach where we swam that afternoon.

True, it was only an inexpensive Timex Expedition watch, one of half a dozen Expeditions I've owned — and lost — over the decades. But in this instance, it seemed like a metaphor for our travel through time and space.

The last full day of this family pilgrimage was spent following a scholar from Hebrew University through the familiar and rarely explored corners of Old Jerusalem, whose famous public spaces — the Wailing Wall, the Via Delorosa, the Church of the Sepulcher, the Dome of the Rock — were jammed with tourists throwing down money on "holy" relics and cheap souvenirs while young Israeli guards kept watch with Uzis in hand, a stunning contrast that made these famous pilgrimage sites feel oddly oppressive.

It was only in the much quieter Armenian and Christian sectors of the old city, where tourists rarely venture and the churches are spectacular, airy and cool, that I found myself breathing easier and wondering why the so-called holy sites had felt anything but.

An answer of sorts revealed itself weeks later when we set off on foot with our fellow pilgrims on the Via Francigena, an 80-mile walk through the stunning countryside and soulful hill towns of Tuscany.

On our first day out, we walked 18 miles through lush vineyards and olive orchards — sampling ripening grapes and recently cured olives as we went — traversing a forest where the annual wild boar hunt had just begun. Owing to my dodgy knees, I volunteered to be a sweeper bringing up the rear of the group, a pattern I repeated all week. This allowed me to walk at my own pace, get to know other pilgrims who took their turn bringing up the rear, and travel at my leisure, frequently by myself for hours at a time, entirely off the clock of the world and my lost Expedition watch — as our group leader Greg liked to say — off the hamster wheel of our lives.

At the end of each grueling hike, I enjoyed getting to know my fellow travelers over pasta and good red wine, rowdy fellowship and swapping tales of blistered feet and the day's ah-ha! moments. The excellent gelato cured a lot of what ailed my aching feet and muscles.

For this pilgrim, however, it was the quiet hours of walking alone or with my wife that I came to savor most, following a stony trail traveled by untold thousands before us across the ages, through deep forests or over sweeping hilltops where distant villages and Medieval abbeys — our destination each day — sat like painted kingdoms in a Medici fresco.

My only real concern was the fabled Tuscan heat of late summer. But after walking for two days in the heat, something rather marvelous happened.

I emerged from a deep glen where I'd stopped to look at chestnut trees and wild mushrooms to find Wendy waiting for me on a rise in the stony road, just as a thunderstorm broke and a cooling rain fell. Over the hill, we came upon idle orchards and an abandoned farmhouse being reclaimed by the wild.

We sheltered there for a while, soaking in the glorious rain, looking at the vacant rooms, wondering about the people who once called this beautiful ruin a home half a century ago or just last year.

Unexpectedly, I found this to be the most moving moment of the entire pilgrimage, a reminder of our own brief walk through the storms of life and a changing universe. Wendy was kind enough to take a photograph of it.

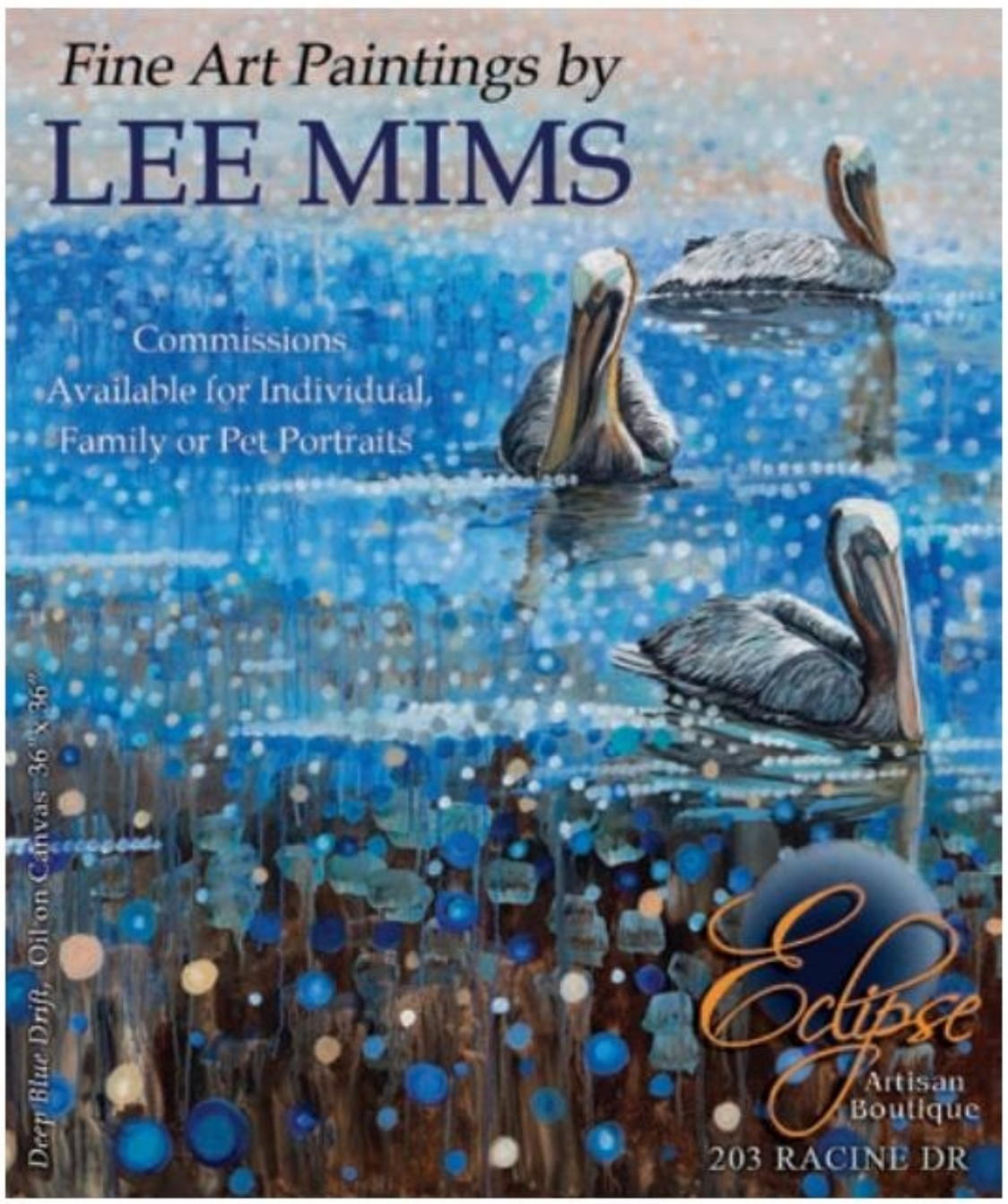
The rain mercifully followed us to Siena and Rome, where the skies cleared, the sun bobbed out, the heat returned and the summer tourists swarmed over the Vatican and its celebrated museums.

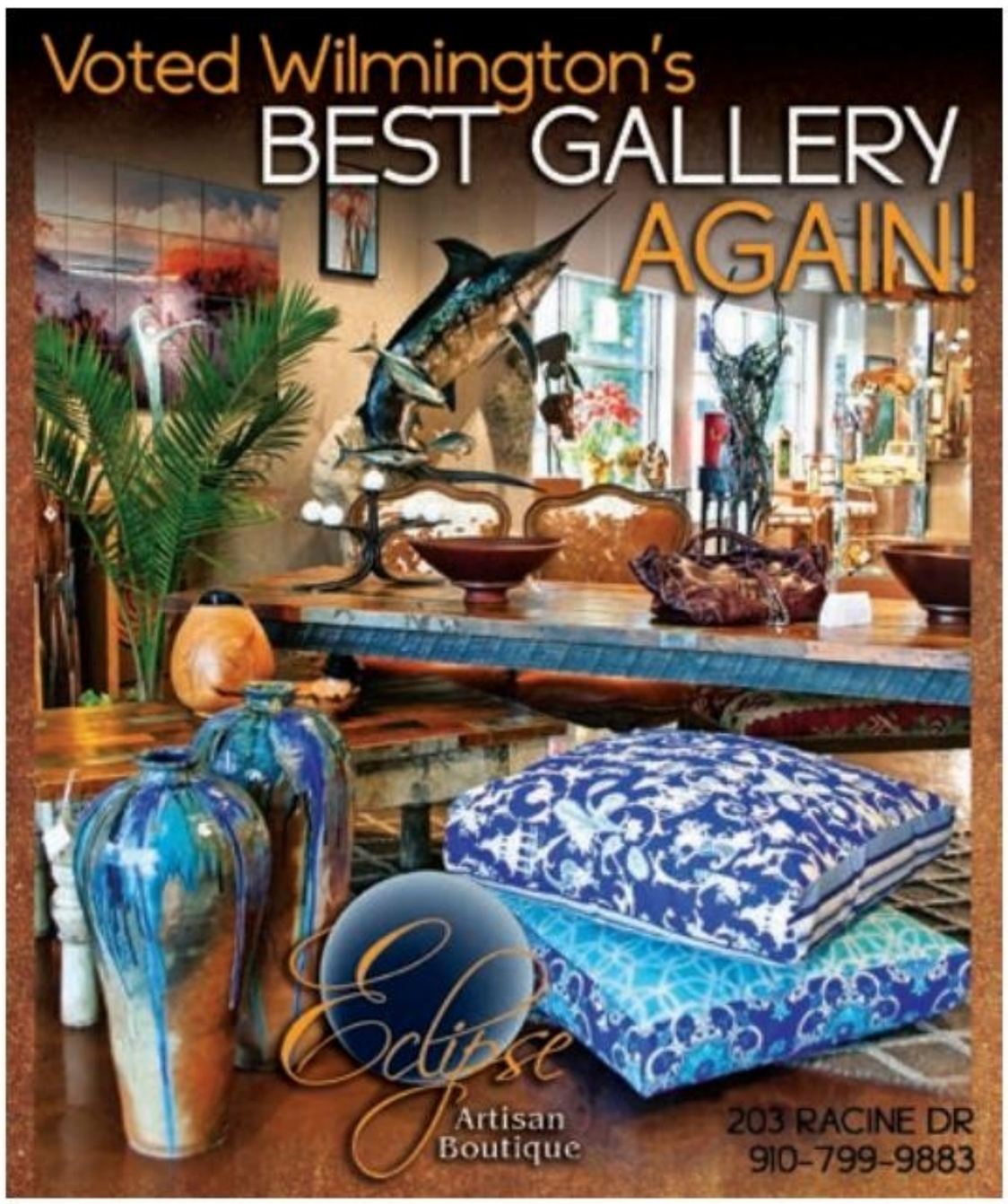
I bailed out halfway on the official Vatican tour, feeling as oppressed by the grandeur of monumental Rome as the holy relics of Old Jerusalem, concluding I must either be a poor excuse for a Christian pilgrim or a true country mouse.

Back home, I had a friend who is a gifted artist secretly paint the abandoned farmhouse, and gave it to my wife for Christmas.

She loved the painting but joked that it was really for me. I couldn't disagree, pointing out that I also gave myself a new Expedition watch for our next pilgrimage.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.





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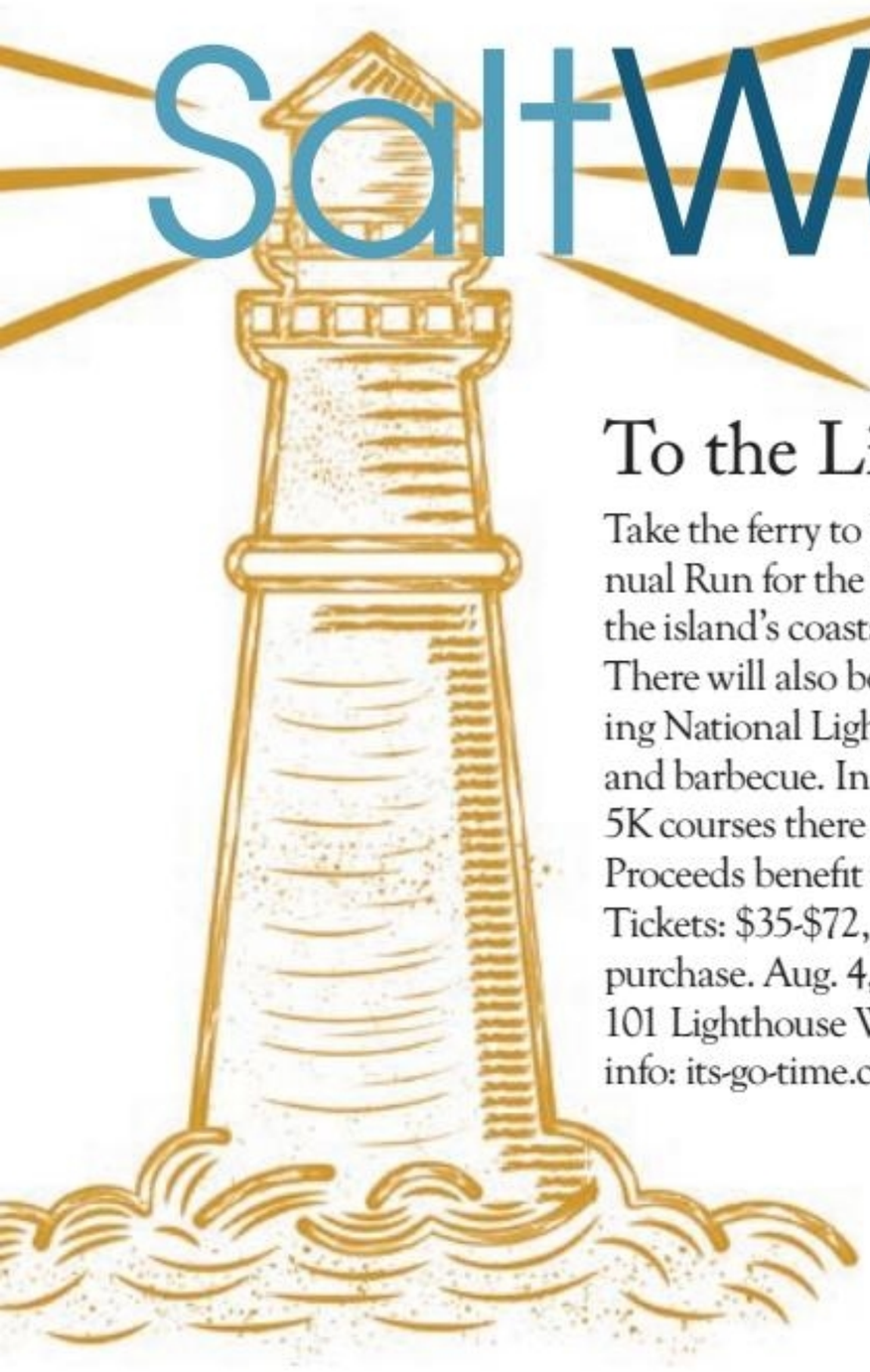

To the Lighthouse

Take the ferry to Bald Head Island for the annual Run for the Light, a scenic race through the island's coastal dunes and maritime forest. There will also be an afternoon festival celebrating National Lighthouse Day with music, beer and barbecue. In addition to timed 10K and 5K courses there will be a 1-mile untimed run. Proceeds benefit the Old Baldy Foundation. Tickets: $35-$72, depending on ferry ticket purchase. Aug. 4, 6 p.m. Old Baldy Lighthouse, 101 Lighthouse Wynd, Bald Head Island. For info: its-go-time.com/run-for-the-light.

Thunder and Lightning

Thalian Hall is the proud owner of America's only operating Thunder Roll, a 19th-century sound effect that originally employed cannonballs running down wooden troughs in the stage's rafters to re-create the sound of an indoor thunderstorm. Thalian Hall still uses its Thunder Roll, which has delighted generations of audiences. Come in from the heat and travel back in time. Admission: Free. Aug. 10, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 632-2285.

Catch a Wave…

Three important surfing events will take place along the coast this month:

PHOTO BY BEN RICHARDSON

On Aug. 11, Life Rolls On, an organization founded by world champion quadriplegic surfer Jesse Billauer, hosts an Adaptive Surf Clinic for people living with disabilities. The organization hosts skating and surfing events all over the country. Admission is free for everyone. Aug. 11, 7 a.m. 2 Carolina Beach Ave. North, Carolina Beach. For more info: liferollson.org/northcarolina.

PHOTO BY CHANDLER HATCH

On Aug. 16 to 18, the O'Neill-Sweetwater Pro Am Surf Fest will take place in Wrightsville Beach. It's one of the largest surfing contests on the East Coast and attracts professional surfers from around the world. There is a pro purse of $20,000. Admission: Free. Aug. 16-18, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Birmingham Street, Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 256-3821 or sweetwatersurfshop.com.

On Aug. 24-25 check out the Wrightsville Beach Wahine Classic. Open to female surfers of all levels and age groups, there will be shortboard and long-board competitions as well as an SUP division. Best viewing spots: Wrightsville Beach Public Access 37 and 38. Awards ceremony will take place at 3 p.m. on Sunday. Admission: Free. Aug. 24-25, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Wrightsville Beach (South End). For info: (910) 465-9638 or wahineclassic.com.

Starry, Starry Night

Founded in 1983, the Cape Fear Astronomical Society welcomes all night-sky enthusiasts and offers field trips to sites of astronomical interest. Carolina Beach State Park will be the setting for observing the heavens at the society's August astronomy program. Telescopes will be set up for viewing stars, the moon and Jupiter. Admission: Free. Aug. 3, 8 p.m. Carolina Beach State Park, Visitor's Center Parking Lot, 1010 State Park Road, Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 458-8206.

All That Jazz

Artistry in Jazz is a Wilmington-based ensemble of 21 musicians and a vocalist who love to play big band jazz, particularly the West Coast stylings of the legendary Stan Kenton. The group plays arrangements by Kenton, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller, among other greats. They will perform an outdoor concert on Carolina Beach on Aug. 9. Be there or be square! Admission: Free. Aug. 9, 7 p.m-9 p.m. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Blvd., Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 686-7451 or artistryinjazz.net.

Farewell to Summer

Still looking for party? Here are three ways to end the summer in style:

The 14th Annual Wilmington Fur Ball's theme this year is Roaring Twenties Speakeasy. Dress accordingly. Tickets: $100. Aug. 24, 6:30-10:30 p.m. The Terraces on Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. For info: wilmingtonfurball.com.

Lumina Daze, a dance party, benefits the Wrightsville Beach Museum of History. Music provided by the Wilmington Big Band, the Dixieland All-Stars, and The Imitations. Tickets: $35-$45. Aug. 25, 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wilmington. For info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

Celebrate the end of summer at the Last Chance for White Pants Gala, a party to benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice. Tickets begin at $150. Aug. 24, 7 p.m.-12 a.m. Audi Cape Fear, 255 Old Eastwood Road, Wilmington. For info: lcfh.org/event/2019-last-chance-for-white-pants-gala.

She Sells Seashells

Malacologists and amateurs alike from across the state will be attending the 43rd Annual North Carolina Shell Show, which offers something for everyone—from scientific displays to a wide range of shell dealers with stunning specimens for sale. Admission: $4. Coastline Convention and Event Center, 501 Nutt St., Wilmington. For info: (336) 693-4492 or ncshellclub.com.

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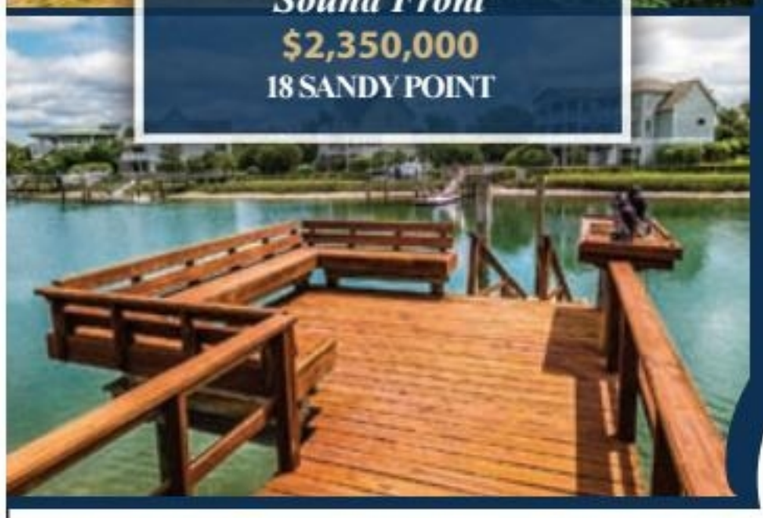

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A Tree Grows in Carolina

Two debut novels renew old Brooklyn ties

By D.G. Martin

Some North Carolina literary old-timers remember a special link between North Carolina and Brooklyn.

In 1943 Harper & Brothers published the best-seller, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, one of America's most-loved novels. The North Carolina connection?

Although its author, Betty Smith, based the novel on her experiences growing up in Brooklyn, she wrote the book in Chapel Hill. As a struggling divorcée with two children, she had moved to North Carolina to work at the University of North Carolina as a part of Paul Green's writing program. The money she earned kept her going until the success of her book gave stability to her economic life.

This year the literary connection between Brooklyn and North Carolina has been renewed by two debut novelists, each with connections in both places. It happened earlier this year when Smith's publisher, now HarperCollins, released *A Woman Is No Man*, the debut novel of Etaf Rum.

Like Smith, Rum based her novel on her life growing up in Brooklyn. Like Smith, the divorced Rum moved to North Carolina. Like Smith, she had two children. Like Smith, she found work in higher education, in Rum's case, community colleges near where she lives in Rocky Mount.

Rum's Palestinian immigrant family and neighbors in Brooklyn in the 1990s and 2000s are not the same as Smith's families, whose roots were in Western Europe. Still, both books deal with women's struggles to make their way in families and communities dominated by men.

The central character in the first part of Rum's book is Isra, a 17-year-old Palestinian girl whose family forces her into marriage with an older man, Adam. He owns a deli and lives with his parents and siblings in Brooklyn. Adam and Isra move into his family's basement. Isra becomes a virtual servant to Adam's mother, Fareeda. She pushes the couple to have children, males who can make money and build the family's reputation and influence. When Isra produces only four children, all girls, she is dishonored by Fareeda and by Adam, who begins to beat her regularly.

Isra and Adam's oldest daughter, Deya, becomes the central character of the second part of the book. Adam and Isra have died, and Fareeda raises their children.

When Deya is a high school senior, Fareeda begins to look for a man in the Palestinian community for her to marry. Deya wants to go to college, but she is afraid to bolt from her family and the community's customs.

Though fiction, *A Woman Is No Man* is clearly autobiographical. As such, Rum explains, the book "meant challenging many long-held beliefs in my community and violating our code of silence."

"Growing up," she writes, "there were limits to what women could do in society. Whenever I expressed a desire to step outside the prescribed path of marriage and motherhood, I was reminded over and over again: A woman is no man."

She writes that "what I hope people from both inside and outside my community see when they read this novel are the strength and resiliency of our women." It will stir readers for other reasons, too. Its themes of conflict between a drive for individual fulfillment and the demands of community and family loyalty are universal.

The author's well-turned and beautiful writing makes reading this debut novel a pleasure. Finally, her careful, fair-minded, sym-

pathetic descriptions of complicated and interesting characters give the story a classic richness. Whether or not *A Woman Is No Man* attains the beloved status of *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*, it will surely be a widely appreciated treasure.

Another debut novel connects Brooklyn and North Carolina. This time it is a North Carolina native who moves to Brooklyn from Elizabeth City. From there, De'Shawn Charles Winslow moved to Harlem, where he wrote *In West Mills*, a book about African-Americans living and struggling in eastern North Carolina from roughly 1940 to 1987. There are no major white characters, and no focus on Jim Crow racism. There is almost nothing about racial conflict or the civil rights struggle. Putting these themes aside, Winslow shows his characters grappling with universal challenges that people of all races confront as they deal with the human situation.

West Mills is a fictional small town in eastern North Carolina, somewhere between Elizabeth City, where the author grew up, and Ahoskie, where the main character of the novel was born and reared.

That main character, Azalea Centre, or Knot, as she is called by everyone, has moved to West Mills from Ahoskie, where her father is a dentist and a bulwark of the local church. Knot, however, wants to get away from her family and make her own way.

She finds a teaching job in West Mills. Knot loves 19th century English literature. That sounds good for a teacher, but she also loves cheap moonshine and bedding a variety of men. One of them, Pratt Shepherd, wants to marry her. But after a session of enthusiastic lovemaking, she tosses him out of her life.

Soon after Pratt leaves, Knot learns she is pregnant. She does not want to end the pregnancy, but wants nothing to do with the child after its birth. To the rescue comes a dear friend, Otis Lee Loving, and his wife, Penelope, or "Pep." They find a local couple to adopt Knot's daughter. Only a few people in the community know that Frances, daughter of Phillip and Lady Waters, is really Knot's birth child.

Shortly after she recovers from her delivery, Knot becomes pregnant again. Otis Lee

comes to the rescue once more. He finds a place for the new baby with local storeowners, Brock and Ayra Manning. They name the baby Eunice.

When they grow up, Frances and Eunice, not knowing about their common origin, come to despise each other and fight for the attention of the same man. On this situation, Winslow builds a series of confrontations and complications that challenge the comfortable order of the West Mills community.

Meanwhile, as time passes, the community seems immune to the racial conflicts developing in other parts of the state. In one of the book's few mentions of racial conflict, Otis Lee hears stories in 1960 about "the young colored people in Greensboro who had organized a sit-in a couple of months earlier" and pronounced it a terrible thing. Winslow writes, "Greensboro hadn't come to them yet. And Otis Lee hoped things would get better so that it wouldn't have to."

Otis Lee is not only Knot's loyal friend and rescuer, he becomes a major character. In a flashback to prohibition days he travels to New York City to rescue an older sister who is trying to pass for white. That effort fails, but his relationship with that woman provides a poignant thread that carries the book to one of its surprising endings.

Gathering early praise, *Charlotte Observer* critic Dannye Powell wrote of *In West Mills*, "Within its confines lies all you need to know of human nature — its stubbornness and grit, its tenderness and devotion, its longing and its sorrow, and how the best-kept secrets will threaten to take apart the heart, chamber by chamber."

She concludes, "You'll be hearing more about Winslow and his stunning debut novel."

You will be hearing more about Winslow *and* Etaf Rum. Betty Smith would be amazed and proud.

D.G. Martin hosts North Carolina Bookwatch *Sunday at 11 a.m. and Tuesday at 5p.m. on UNC-TV. The program also airs on the North Carolina Channel Tuesday at 8 p.m. To view prior programs go to http://video.unctv.org/show/nc-bookwatch/episodes/*

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Southern Holy Smoke

Matthew Register's quick rise from roadside to barbecue fame

By Wiley Cash · Photographs by Mallory Cash

For Garland, North Carolina, native Matthew Register, it all started with a dream, a dream of teaching his three young children how to cook barbecue.

"In eastern North Carolina, you're always around barbecue," he tells me on a warm July day. The two of us are sipping pale ales from Foothills Brewing on the back deck of his family's vacation home in Kure Beach. "Soon I realized that I could stand outside and drink beer and listen to music and nobody would bother me if I was cooking. And then I read John Shelton Reed's book *Holy Smoke*, and it changed me. I began experimenting with recipes and giving barbecue away. People started calling and asking if I'd make barbecue for their family reunions."

Once the people of eastern North Carolina, a place so steeped in barbecue history and culture that it has its own style of barbecue, came calling, Matthew and his wife, Jessica, knew they were on to something. They opened a roadside stand and sold barbecue sandwiches for $5. They wanted to sell 30 on the first day; they sold 150 instead.

"We couldn't believe it," he says. "It all happened so fast." And then the Sampson County Health Department got involved. "I have a really good relationship with the health department now, but back then they made pretty clear that I couldn't be selling sandwiches on the side of the road."

Matthew and Jessica began the search for a spot to open a small restaurant, and a former fish market seemed like the perfect place. In April 2014, Southern Smoke opened in downtown Garland, and the dream of teaching his children about barbecue exploded into something Matthew never could have imagined. Since then he has appeared on *The Today Show*. He has been featured in magazines and spoken at conferences around the country. And, in May, Register released his first cookbook, *Southern Smoke: Barbecue, Traditions, and Treasured Recipes Reimagined for Today.*

Even after all those hallmarks of success — a thriving restaurant, national acclaim and a cookbook — Matthew, as he writes in the book's introduction, "didn't set out to become a chef. In fact, even once cooking all day was my full-time job, I was uncomfortable with the title."

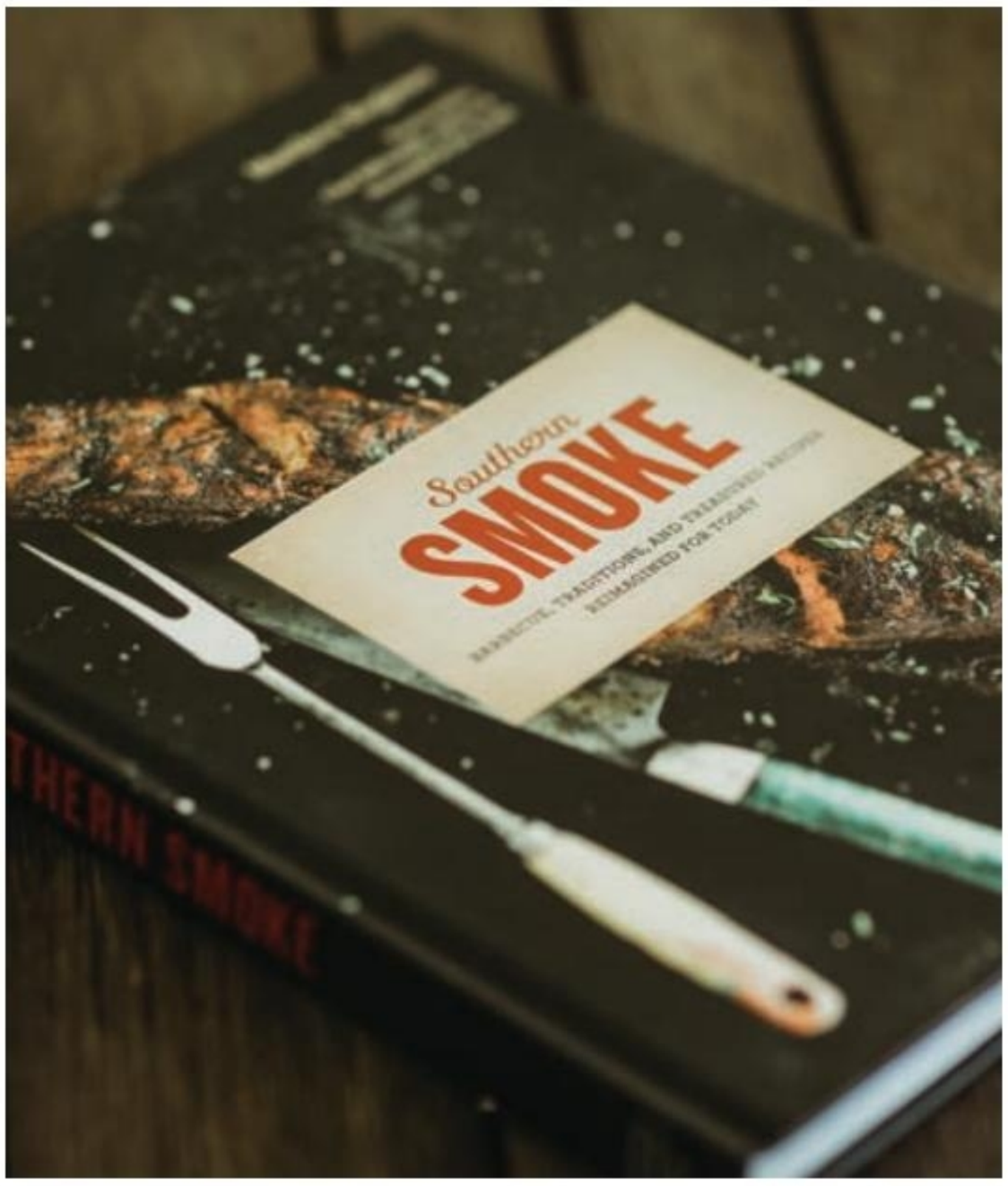
I ask him if he has grown more comfortable with being considered a chef in recent years.

"A little," he says. "When I think of the word *chef*, I think, that's what Keith Rhodes is. That's what Dean Neff is. That's what Ashley Christensen is. I'm slowly growing more comfortable with it." He takes a sip of his beer and looks at his book, where it sits on the table between us. "But now I've got this cookbook, and I'm dealing with those same feelings when people call me *author*."

Make no mistake: Matthew Register can cook barbecue, but he can also write about it. While there are plenty of wonderful recipes in *Southern Smoke*, there are also the stories behind them. For example, the recipe for Smoked Chicken Quarters with Papa Nipper's Church Sauce tells the story of Jessica's grandfather, Jimmy Nipper, a man who "spent much of his youth shoveling hardwood coals into pits night after night, cooking whole hogs." While he went on to join the North Carolina highway patrol, Jimmy continued to cook for fundraisers and church functions.

One of my favorite recipes is for Saltine Cracker Fried Oysters, which features a secret passed down from his great-grandmother Grace Jarmen Hart. The recipe also features instructions for making his grandmother Dorothy Hart's tartar sauce with Duke's mayonnaise, to which Matthew dedicates a short essay that argues for Duke's being the best mayonnaise around. Don't use it? "That's a shame," writes Matthew.

I ask him about the stories and historical information that



accompany the recipes, and he tells me it was important both to honor his family as well as the diverse backgrounds of the people who have contributed to Southern cuisine.

"With Southern food, there may be five different wives' tales about a dish, but you still don't know where the food came from. A lot of people don't understand how important West African food and culture are to Southern cuisine and vegetables like okra, for example. Our barbecue style is from the West Indies. A lot of our cuisine came from other parts of the world. But this is our story. This is what we are."

Aside from writing the recipes, I ask him about the experience of making a cookbook. "We shot the photographs for the whole cookbook in four days," he says, his forehead breaking out in sweat at the mere memory of it. "It was late July, early August, 100 degrees. We made 16 to 18 dishes a day. We just cranked out food." Perhaps that is what Matthew is best at: cranking out food that is personal, consistent, and brimming with history.

"We opened Southern Smoke and had a long line on the first day, and the line hasn't stopped," he says.

Later, after telling Matthew and his family goodbye, I notice a plaque hanging just outside the front door. It reads, "Be careful with your dreams. They may come true."

Matthew Register should have been more careful.

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His latest novel, The Last Ballad, *is available wherever books are sold.*

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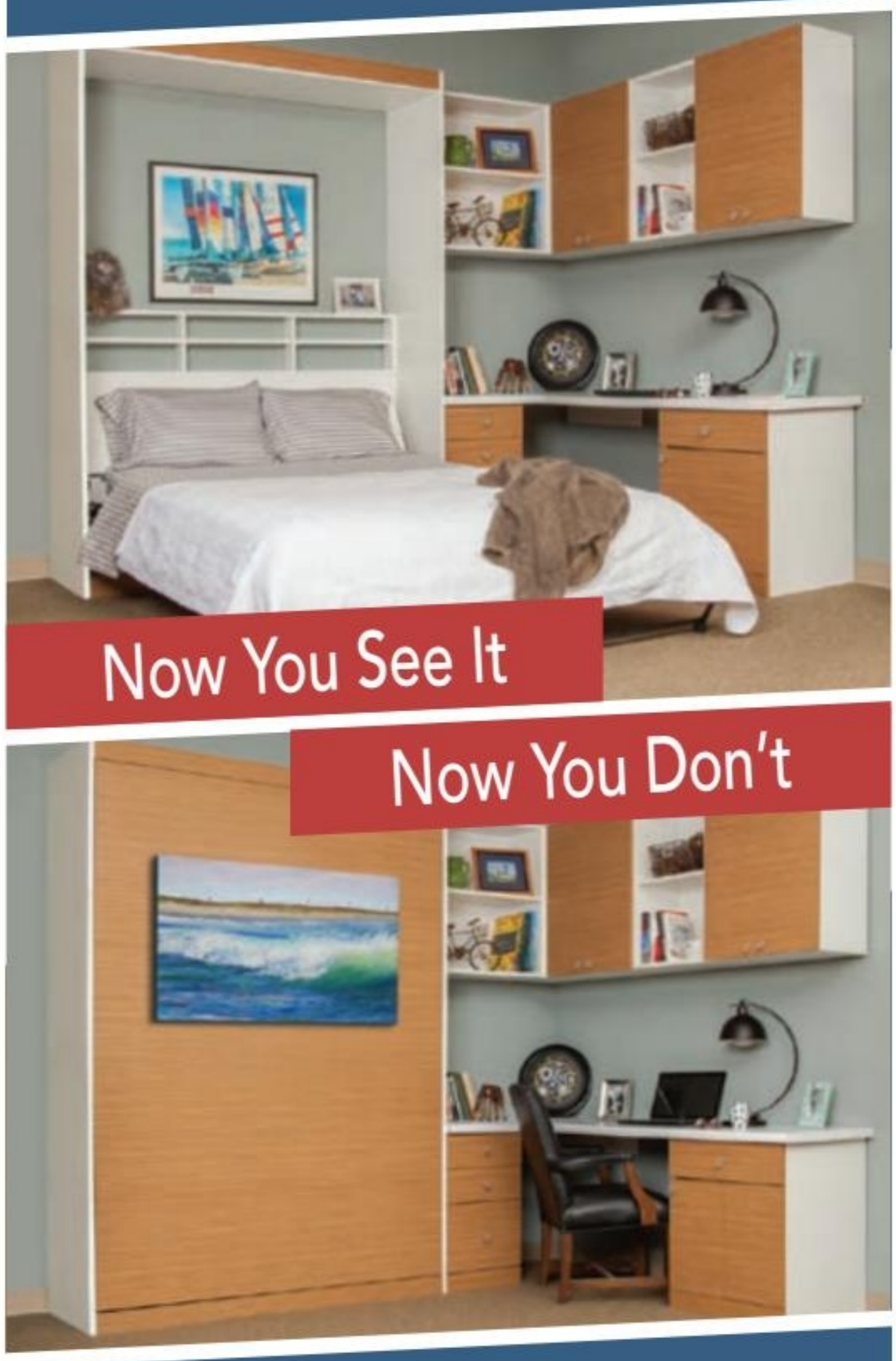

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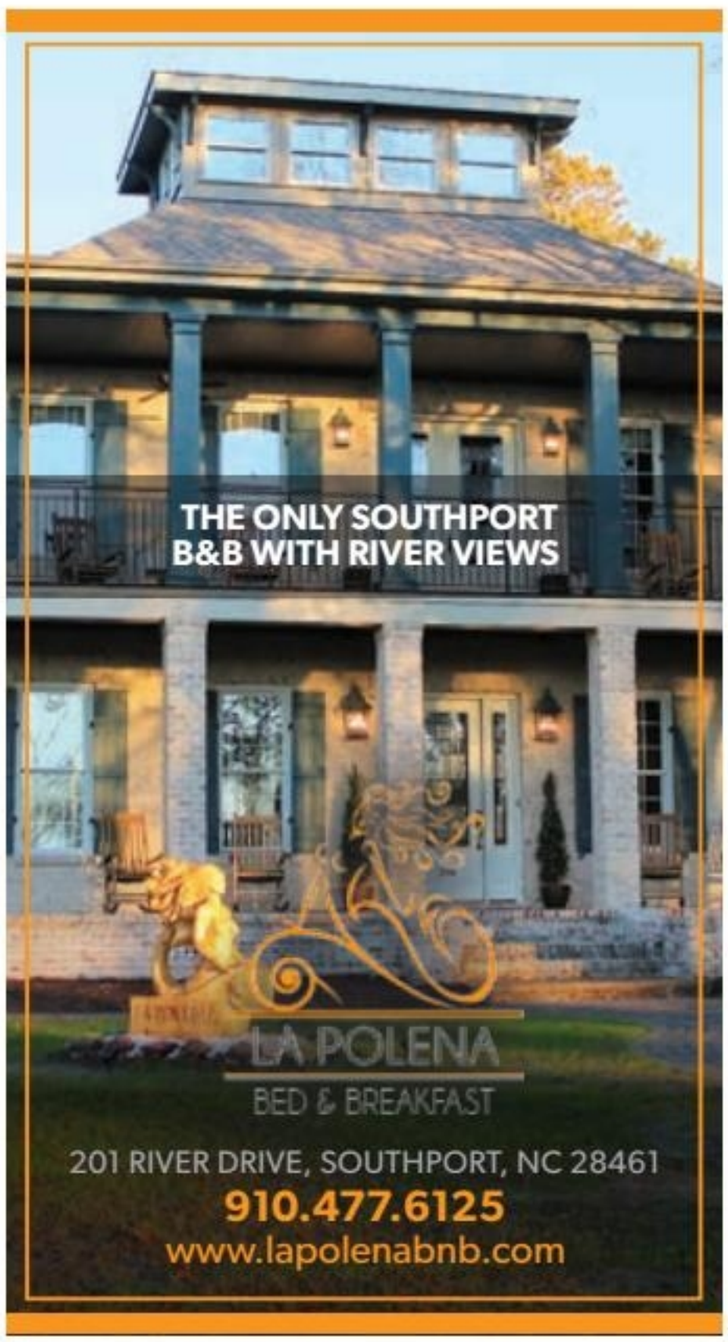

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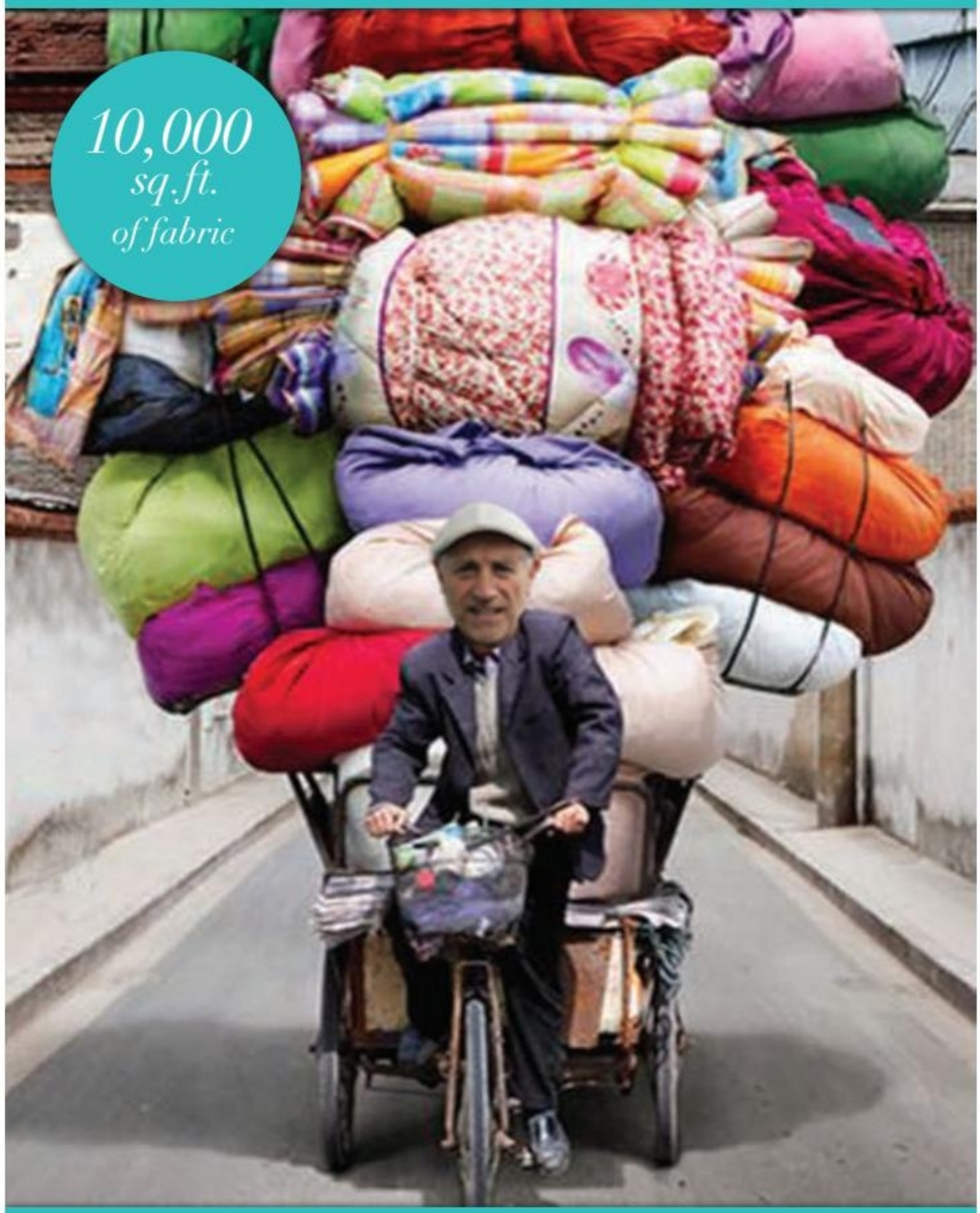

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Glowing Results

The mission of Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington is to prepare young women to be the first in their families to attend college. The task starts early

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

By Dana Sachs

Jahleese Hadley, college-bound counselor at GLOW (Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington), an all-girls charter school designed especially for students who will be the first in their families to attend college. GLOW is welcoming students at its new campus in Wilmington this fall.

GLOW enrolled its first class of sixth-graders in 2016. You've added a new class every year, with the oldest now starting ninth grade. Why do these young students need a college counselor? College is so far away.
It is, but our goal is that these girls will be college-ready when they graduate. The vast majority of students who go to college in this country have some identity around being a college-going person. Many of our girls don't have that, so we start in sixth grade to begin to build that culture. We don't want these girls to see high school as the pinnacle of their education.

So you're trying to instill the idea of continuing after graduation?
Absolutely. GLOW is part of a national alliance, Young Women's Leadership Network. I went to the network's flagship school, in Harlem. The college-going culture there was so pervasive that, when I graduated and people congratulated me for planning to go to college, I was thinking, "But what else was I going to do?" Graduating from high school and going to college was what I understood the path to be.

And that sense of continuing came from the school, not from your family background?
I grew up in a household with one parent working. That parent was under-educated, but she did the absolute best she could. She provided for us just fine, but I realize how little we had and how little she was able to give me in the way of setting me up for the path that I'm on now. I came from a family that was working poor, and in order to escape that, I needed to be upwardly mobile. So the school really was a game-changer for me.

Why did you decide to go to that school?
So, middle school at that time started in seventh grade in New York. When I was in sixth grade, my mom said, "There's a school, it's three blocks from your school" — I was going to a gifted school at the time — "and it's an all-girls school and you have to wear a uniform." And I am such a dork that that was all I needed.

You liked the idea of a uniform?
I liked the idea of going somewhere different. Actually, I already went to a school with a uniform, but then I saw this school's uniform. It was a plaid wool skirt. And you had to wear something with the emblem on it — a blazer or a pullover sweater vest or a bolero.

Very preppy.
It felt preppy! And different. And then I went to visit. All the walls were pink and blue. The classrooms had lots of light. And it just felt very special.

Now that you're in the administration of one of these schools, how do you identify which students have a good chance of success?
It's about identifying families who are motivated to be there. The principal of my school in New York later told me that he listened for kids saying that they were genuinely interested in the school. Or their parents articulated their vision for their kids' success. Those are the things that determine who is going to make it through the program. Not necessarily how smart kids are.

It sounds like parents play a fundamental role.
There is buy-in. At GLOW, a nice portion of our parent community is very invested in our success. They aren't just interested in encouraging us, and being here to assist with the work, but also in challenging that work to make it better, which is what we need.

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THE CONVERSATION

Can you give an example of how parents might challenge you?

A problem in every school — and we are not immune to it — is that kids in the middle don't get as much attention. They're not the most high-achieving. They're not super-struggling. We have to take the time to intentionally meet their needs. It's really important for us to be reminded of that, and for our parents to know that we don't want their kids to just skate on by.

So this is the kind of thing that parents have pointed out to you?

Yeah. And usually it has to do specifically with their kids.

It becomes a partnership, then, between the parents and the school.

In an ideal world, yes. It's not always the case, but that's what we want.

In addition to counseling the kids, you helped start a culinary program at the school. What was the purpose of that?

I'm a baker. That's just something that I do. When I came to GLOW, we were trying to figure out what I was going to do with sixth-graders. How am I going to build relationships with these kids? I said, "I'm going to teach a cooking class." So we did quite a bit of baking. We made cookies. We learned to make biscuit dough. A lot of sugary stuff. And then the adults were like, "Can they learn to work with vegetables, please?" So, we learned to make hummus. Guacamole. The agreement was, "You try everything we make."

How did they react to hummus?

Like sixth-graders: "Ew! I'm not eating that." And I'd say, "The agreement is you're going to take a bite." Half of them liked it. When kids say, "I tried it and I still don't like it," I say, "You know what you like and don't like." Kids who are willing to take risks are going to access more things in the future. My job is to push you to do it and to catch you if you fall. Or, to tell you it's all right if you still hate it, and not shame you. That's important to their development, too.

GLOW's student body is around 57 percent black. As an African- American woman yourself, do you see yourself as a role model for those girls?

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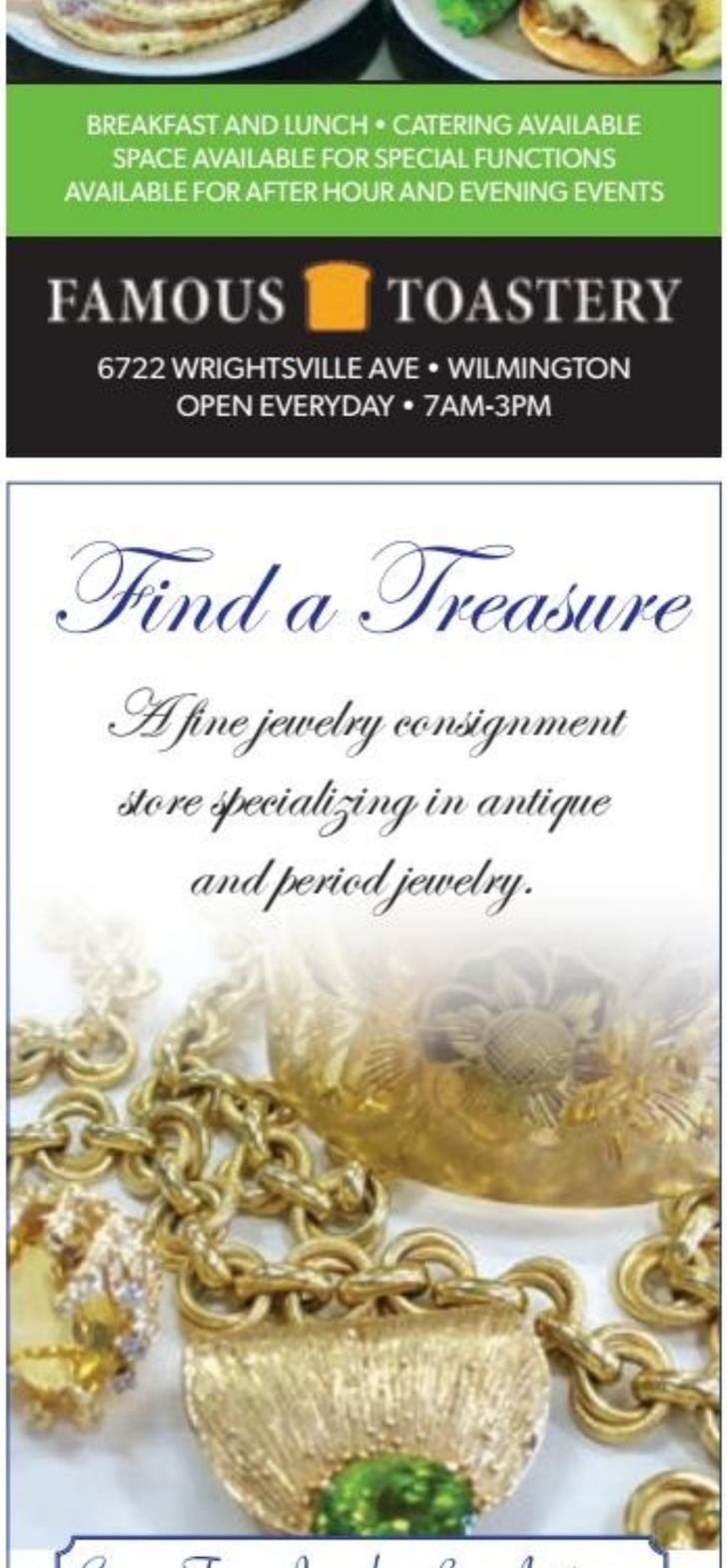

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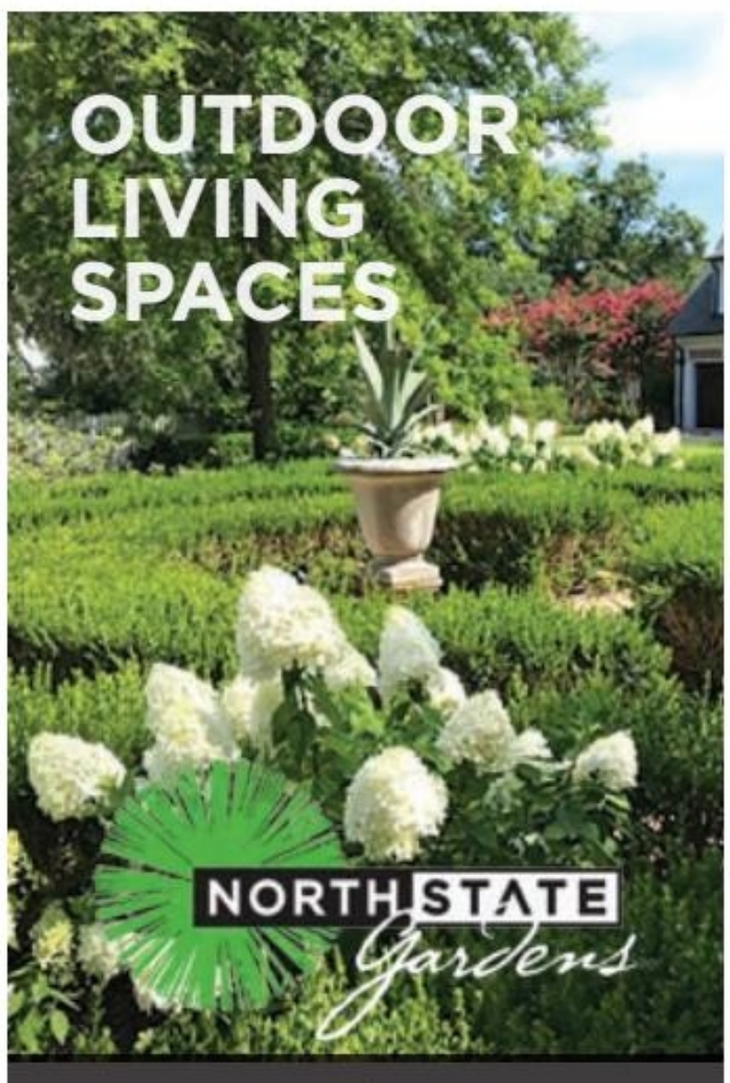

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THE CONVERSATION

I understand the impact that I can have. It's very natural to gravitate toward people who have the same experiences as you, but if they limit themselves to that, they are going to miss out on opportunities. So I understand that my black students might look at me in a different way than my white or Latina students, but I want them all to feel like they can talk to me, and that they all have a sense of comfort with me.

Would you encourage these girls to come back to Wilmington after college and build their careers here?

I don't have to encourage our girls to come back to Wilmington. Students who benefit from public service feel drawn back to their home communities or to communities like them. The majority want to help other people. I don't think this needs to be a conversation: "Once you make it, girls, come back to Wilmington and fix this place." This is their community.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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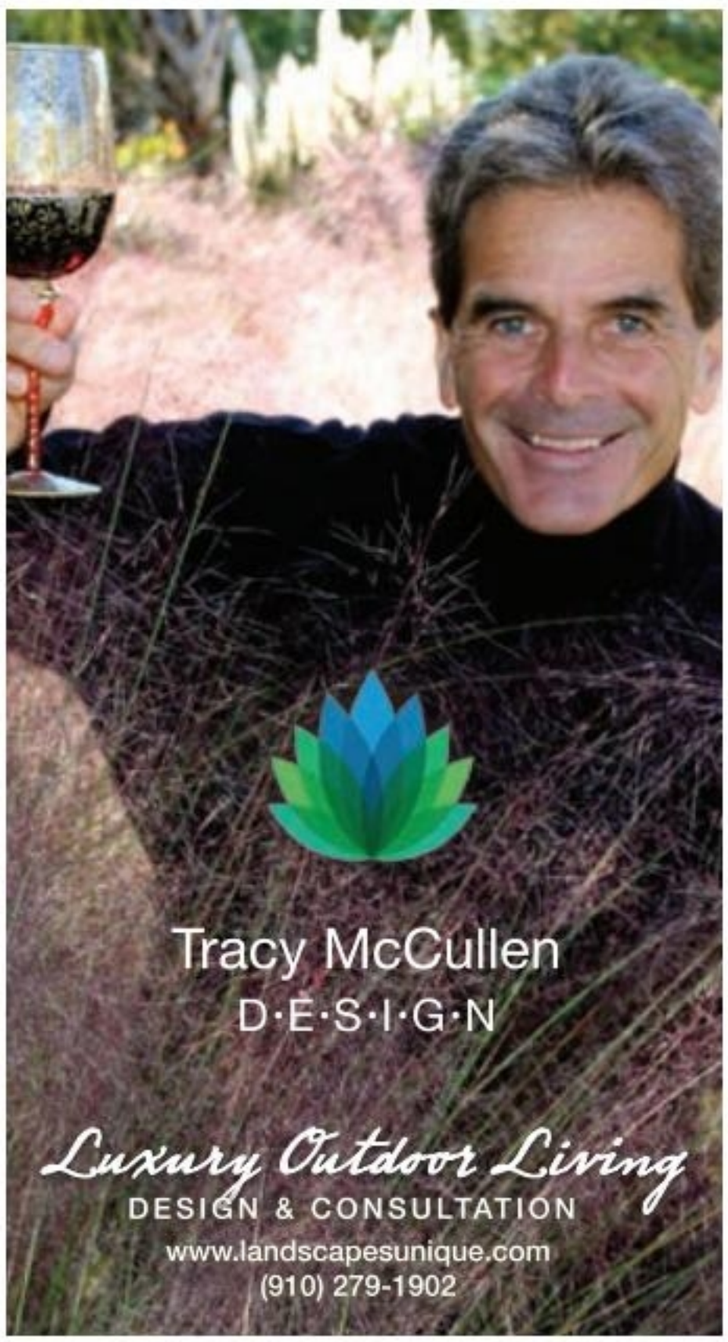

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Plum Crazy

America's sudden passion for heirloom fruits and vegetables means glorious varieties like Santa Rosa and Mirabelle plums are widely available

By Jane Lear

One of my earliest food memories is of a high-walled garden somewhere along the Cape Fear. It belonged to friends of my parents, and while they sipped long cool drinks in the shade of a venerable live oak, I was allowed to explore and eat pretty much anything I could find. Blueberries, raspberries, the pears reached by shinnying up a knotted rope to a convenient branch. Figs, plump and sweet with ultra-delicate skins.

And there were wonderful plums. I found their thin, taut red skins and gold flesh mesmerizing. Their rich aroma and full-on sweet-tart flavor were a revelation, and their texture — well, after my mother tried one, it was the first time I heard the word "lush."

Those beauts were worlds apart from the characterless supermarket plums that are so common today. For ages, I thought those plums I enjoyed as an 8-year-old couldn't possibly have been as magical as I remembered.

Until, that is, about 15 years ago on a visit to northern California, when I first bit into a plum from Frog Hollow Farm. The cultivar was 'Santa Rosa,' I discovered, and I felt as though I'd found a long-lost friend.

Santa Rosa has a grand American history. It was bred in 1906 by the celebrated horticulturalist Luther Burbank (1849–1926) at his plant research center. Named for its birthplace, the plum is arguably his crowning achievement. It's no surprise that our family friends, both enthusiastic home orchardists, would have gotten their hands on some trees.

The tight skin of a perfectly ripe Santa Rosa pops when you bite into it, and when devouring the flesh ("lush" is exactly what it is), it's best if you're leaning over the kitchen sink. I have this image of the modernist poet William Carlos Williams doing so, whisking his tie out of the way at the last second, before turning guilt into art in "This is Just To Say":

"I have eaten / the plums / that were in / the icebox / and which / you were probably / saving / for breakfast. / Forgive me / they were delicious / so sweet / and so cold."

Any high school English teacher will tell you that this much-anthologized poem, written in 1934, can have a number of different meanings, including temptation and the triumph of the physical over the spiritual. But it's also a great example of how to offer a non-apologizing apology after inconveniencing a loved

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

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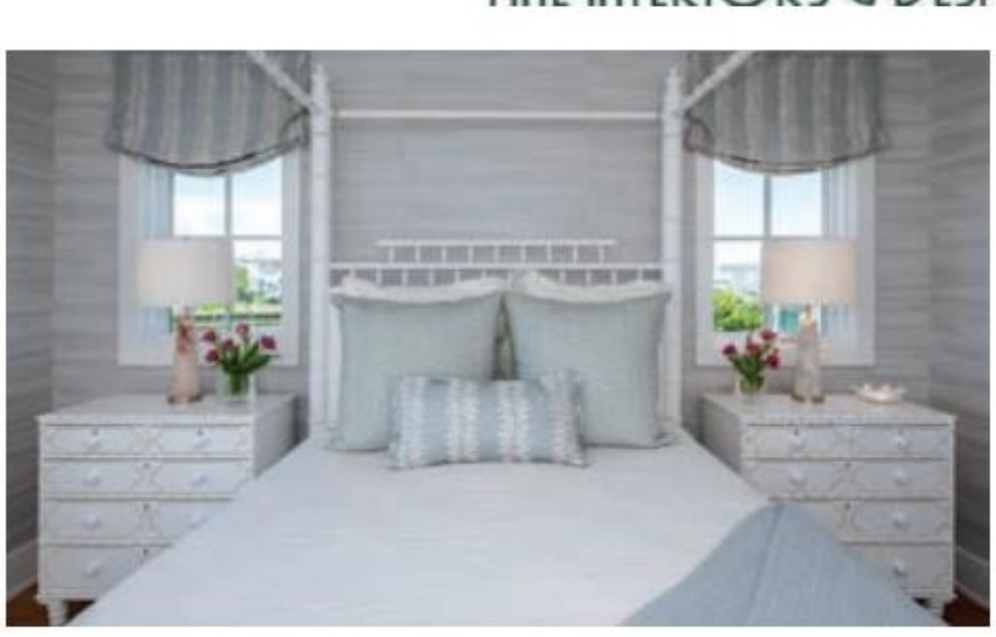

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one. The subsequent parodies (the first, by Williams himself) continued for decades and indeed have been given new life as a meme on Twitter:

"I have closed / the tabs / that were in / the browser / and which / you were probably / saving / to read / Forgive me / they hogged memory / and were / so old," wrote stvnrlly@stvnrlly.

Happily, America's increasing passion for heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables means a wider array of interesting plum varieties is available, including Santa Rosa and the small 'Mirabelle,' which is yellow blushed with crimson and intensely sweet. (In France, it's used to make plum eau-de-vie.) Keep your eyes open, and if you see juicy looking tree-ripened plums for sale anywhere, snap them up.

The Williamses and their icebox aside, plums won't continue to ripen if chilled. Keep them at room temperature and out of direct sunlight instead. If you must refrigerate them (they're a magnet for fruit flies), don't wash the ripe fruit beforehand, and bring to room temperature before eating. Another tip? Never cluster or stack plums or any stone fruit — that leads to uneven ripening or bruising. So spread out your bounty onto a platter instead of piling it into a bowl.

Whenever I see promising plums, I always buy too many, because I can't decide what to do with them. A galette is always appealing, as is an upside-down cake. But I often take the path of least resistance and roast them, a technique I picked up from cookbook author and all-around culinary goddess Georgeanne Brennan. She roasts her stone fruit in a wood-fired outdoor oven, but a regular old oven works fine too, even though it isn't nearly as romantic. And her trick of serving the roasted fruit with crème fraîche worked into fresh ricotta is a keeper: The thickened cream gives the fluffy, uncomplicated ricotta a nutty sweetness, a little tang, and voluptuous body.

I love the rich, faintly spicy flavor of roasted plums all by themselves, but you could easily use peaches or a combination of stone fruits — plums and nectarines, say. And you could substitute a dollop of mascarpone or softly whipped heavy cream

for the creamy ricotta.

Roasted plums are versatile. They swing homey or haute, and are ideal if you aren't a baker or need a gluten-free dessert, because there is no crust or crumble topping involved. They cook quietly all by themselves and make the kitchen smell heavenly. And, if you are fortunate, there will be a spoonful or two left for tomorrow morning.

Then again, you could just eat your plums out of hand, leaning over the kitchen sink.

Roasted Plums with Creamy Ricotta and Honey

1 cup fresh ricotta
About 1/4 cup crème fraîche
A dash of pure vanilla extract
Sugar
6 to 8 plums, depending on size, or a mixture of plums and nectarines and/or peaches
Extra-virgin olive oil
Honey, for drizzling

1. Preheat the oven to 475º. Stir together the ricotta, crème fraîche, vanilla and about 2 tablespoons sugar, or to taste, in a bowl. Pop that into the fridge until ready to use.
2. Cut the plums from stem end to bottom, first down one side, then the other. Gently twist the halves together; if they separate from the pit easily, that means they are freestone. Otherwise, they're clingstone, so cut the flesh away from the pit in largish wedges. Put the plums in a shallow baking dish just large enough to fit them in 1 layer. Drizzle with about 1 tablespoon oil and turn them a few times to coat. Generously sprinkle with sugar and turn once or twice more. Roast until the plums have just collapsed and are tender and just caramelized enough, about 20 minutes.
3. Serve the plums in small bowls with the creamy ricotta and honey, for drizzling, on the side.

Jane Lear, formerly of Gourmet *magazine and* Martha Stewart Living, *is the editor of* Feed Me, *a quarterly magazine for Long Island food lovers.*

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Climbing the Ladder

Summer jobs are the bottom rung

ILLUSTRATION BY MERIDITH MARTENS

By Susan S. Kelly

It's August. How's that summer job going for your prodigal son and daughter? You know, the fancy-pants NYC internship that you're heavily subsidizing. Or are your offspring going to one day say accusingly, as mine have, "Why didn't you make me get an internship?"

The short answer is that we were clueless, and, more accurately, didn't know anyone higher up the career-boosting food chain. Your father and I just figured everyone had the same kind of summer jobs we did, i.e., menial. Because the true purpose of summer jobs is to show you what you don't want to be when you grow up. My husband: delivering Cokes from a flatbed truck all over Fayetteville in 100-degree heat; me, hustling quahog jewelry and fake scrimshaw in a tourist joint on Nantucket, where I was hired solely on the basis of my built-in "pleases" and "ma'ams."

Ergo, my children had glam jobs as caddies, counselors, ground trash collectors at apartment complexes (think candy wrappers and condoms; they came home with bloody knuckles from working the parking lot), and as stockroom employees packaging bolts of fabric in a warehouse for UPS pickup. Still, everyone should have to work in what's known as the "service industry" at some time in their life: retail clerk, waitress, lifeguard, etc. If you know an adult who's a jerk, I bet he/she never had to wait tables or take orders as a teenager.

And if you have a college grad on the professional prowl, whatever you do, guide him or her away from the three jobs that nobody, nobody in their sane mind, wants: minister, head of a private school, and the manager of a country club. Constituents — congregations, parents and members — of those occupations believe themselves entitled. In other words, they own you. And I have proof, with the following true-to-life examples.

Headmaster

My aunt and uncle's son, William, went away to boarding school. Before Thanksgiving had even arrived, the headmaster called my aunt to say that William just wasn't going to cut it. He couldn't conform to the rules, couldn't toe the various lines, and William was just going to have to come home. My aunt wasn't fazed. "Oh no, he is not," she informed the headmaster. "I sent a perfectly good child to you in September. Whatever's happened since then is your fault, and you're going to keep him."

Country Club Manager

Frank was an incorrigible charmer who basically lived at the country club. In the dining room, on the golf course, in the card room, but mostly in the bar. Your classic handsome bad boy, who was also drunk, demanding, misbehaving and embarrassing. One morning when the club manager found Frank sleeping under a table in the bar, glasses and cigarettes strewn around him, he called Frank's mother. "Mrs. Simpson," he said politely, "your son has become a real problem. I'm going to have to ask you to do something about his behavior at the club." There was a pause over the line. "And you, sir," Mrs. Simpson replied, "serve very ordinary chicken salad."

Minister

My great-uncle Bill in Walnut Cove had a dog he loved better than life, named John G. But John G kept getting into Lou Petrie's garden. Lou told Bill that if John G got into his garden one more time, he was going to shoot him. Bill paid no attention. One Sunday in church, where my grandmother played the organ, word got 'round the congregation that John G had gotten into the garden again and Lou Petrie had flat-out shot him. Church stopped then and there, and everyone went to the Petries' where, sure enough, John G was lying dead between the tomato vines. The minister's wife dropped to her knees beside the lifeless animal. "Do not worry," she said. "I'll bring John G back to life," and praying loudly, began massaging his bloody body. My grandmother looked on, horrified, then headed straight for the house, and the telephone. She dialed the operator and put in a long-distance call to the bishop of the North Carolina Diocese of the Episcopal Church on a Sunday morning. "Bishop," she said, "you have a minister's wife down here trying to raise a dog from the dead. What are you going to do about it?"

My advice? Steer clear of a career that involves dues, tuition or tithing.

Susan S. Kelly is a blithe spirit, author of several novels, and a proud grandmother.

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Little Blue Heron

A late-summer pleasure

By Susan Campbell

Late summer can be an especially exciting time for those of us who are birders. The abundance of species — whether it is our familiar non-migrants or those beginning to return from Northerly nesting grounds, and even the post-breeding dispersal this way of families from our South — one never knows what might turn up next. Colonial waterbirds as a group display wandering behavior more than most, especially the egrets and herons.

You don't need to travel far to find unexpected visitors. Weather events may cause waterbirds to be blown off-track and show up in the neighborhood. But these lost birds may only stick around for mere hours. However, in other instances, it may be a more deliberate response to environmental conditions that brings them our way.

One bird that frequently appears in wet areas later in the summer (even a good distance inland) is the little blue heron. And it may not be one but several of them that are found together. Surprisingly, they are not usually blue birds. This is because young of the year are actually white. Except for the very tips of the wing feathers (usually a challenge to make out), these birds are covered with white feathers. Unlike the great or snowy egret, which is more common along the coast at this time of year, the bill of these small herons is pinkish or grayish and the legs are greenish.

All these white waders may be spotted in shallow wet habitats: streams, small ponds, water hazards, retention areas. Little blue herons may be by themselves or mixed with other white long-legged waders, or even the much larger great blue heron. Little blues can be identified by their more upright foraging posture and slow, deliberate movements, and a downward-angled bill as they stalk prey. Unlike other smaller waders, they will hunt in deeper water, often all the way up to their bellies. Little blues watch for not only small fish but frogs and crayfish as well as large aquatic insects. It is thought that their coloration allows them to blend inconspicuously with similar white species. The association then provides protection from predators.

Little blues are significantly more successful predators when foraging alongside great egrets. These larger birds are likely to stir up the water as they move after underwater prey, which can flush a meal in the direction of nearby little blues.

It takes these herons at least a year to develop adult plumage — not unlike white ibis, which also breed along our coast (but sport dark plumage their first summer and fall). They may have a pied appearance for a time in late winter or early spring. But by April they will be a slate-blue-gray all over with a handsome bluish bill. Unlike our other wading birds, they lack showy head or neck plumes; they are also unique in having projections on their middle toes that form a comb, which is used as an aid when grooming.

Unfortunately, the little blue heron has experienced an alarming drop in population numbers over the past half-century across North America. Loss of coastal wetland habitat, continued declines in water quality as well as being shot as a nuisance in fish hatcheries all are factors in their decline. So be sure to stop and appreciate these stately birds should you come across one — regardless of where you happen to be.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted at susan@ncaves.com.

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Ask a poet to show you a glimpse of summer and they will not give you words on a page.

"OK," they will tell you, tying a silk cloth over your eyes, and then they will take your hand, guide you to the end of the sidewalk, where you will leave your shoes.

The earth feels wet and cool beneath your feet, each step like a distant memory, and the more you trust the ground beneath you, the more you will notice that everything is alive. Whether or not you've been here before, or think you have, there is something foreign within the familiar, and the possibility of discovery ignites you.

Just beyond a swollen creek, where chorus frogs shriek in the wake of an August rain, something will demand your attention — a fragrance, perhaps. Or filtered light flickering across your face and skin. Or the sense of nearby movement. You will know when it arrives, and when it does, it will draw you closer to the source.

Before the cloth slips down below your eyes, you will feel a shift in the air. And then you will see it: a moss-laced grove, a golden field, the garden of a lover who still haunts you. The poet who led you here is gone, and in the midst of this enchanted dreamscape, you have unearthed something within yourself, a pain or a delight — an awakening that cannot be reversed.

This is the beauty of poetry. Sweet or bitter, subtle or Earth-shaking, whatever truth has been revealed reminds you of the exquisite cauldron of human emotions that you might stumble upon at any instant.

For our annual August Reading Issue, we invited a number of our favorite poets (including two Poet Laureates) to take us somewhere special with their words, matching them with a gifted photographer to illustrate their vision.

In this dreamy, golden season dripping with raw honey and memory, each moment is ripe with surprises. You'll see. You can leave your shoes behind. You need only be open to discovery. — *Ashley Wahl*

Summer

Bee-stung, stringy-haired girl with a belly-full
of grape Kool-Aid, banana popsicles, and

watermelon seeds too small to spit out — you
are born again every summer into the body

of a woman you never met and wouldn't speak
to if you had, with a mother who drove don't

talk to *strangers* into your head like a roofing
nail. I can feel you rising up in me come June,

like a cornstalk pushing through hard ground.
Because of you, I want to climb every tall tree

like a bear cub, find a hot metal slide and scoot
down it, sticky and squealing. I want dirt on my

heels, sugar on my tongue. So I eat cake for
breakfast, go barefoot to get the morning mail.

— *Terri Kirby Erickson*

Terri Kirby Erickson's work has appeared in American Life in Poetry, Asheville Poetry Review, Atlanta Review, The Sun, Valparaiso Poetry Review, *among others. She is the recipient of the Joy Harjo Poetry Prize and a Nautilus Silver Book Award.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY MALLORY CASH

Mallory Cash is a Wilmington-based editorial and portrait photographer whose work has appeared in the Knoxville Museum of Art, multiple regional and national publications and galleries in Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Blackberry Boogie

Ripe, texture's like the underside of a mule's chin,
Or the boldness of July, the Slave Girl's freedom pin
Drawing us back, beginning, a hard knot,
Or mini pincushion set in a finch's breast,
Bent into a bush in August,
Among briars, scratchy as thoughts
Of red bugs I would always get
And pick off with a needle dipped in alcohol-sweat
I scraped around my ankles, sometimes
In my groin, little dots like paprika Mama
Sprinkled over fried chicken to brown it.
The plump berries I loved best, like coal bits
Polished for show in a heritage museum.
My coffee-tin would thud, at first, then rage
With brimful promise Mama's pie-crust
Would turn the Home Comfort Range to lust.

Luscious is the world to mine,
For she would never lose a one to wine,
Or let forgetfulness sour to pudding
In place of blackberry pie, a fitting
Substitute. There just is not one,
And that black, purplish juice? What fun
I always felt, since I was her baby,
Scraping and licking the plate — king at her table.

— *Shelby Stephenson*

A member of the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame, Shelby Stephenson was the eighth North Carolina Poet Laureate and the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet.

The Last Day of Summer

On the last day of summer the sun sank slowly
through the roiling clouds into the surface
of the lake. It was evening, and for a moment
while the sun lay between clouds and water
the whole lake shone like burnished gold.

Afterwards, he stood on the dock and watched
the small brown leaves on the path to the house
and thought how soon the path itself would be
leaves. He thought of the goldfish, buried
for the winter in the covered pond and how

glad he had been to see them in the spring,
uncovered at Easter, safe for another year.
Now, his body bare, he glided into the smooth
lake and felt the warmth in his limbs for the final
time. In the morning they would leave

and when they came back another year
perhaps the quiet place where he had stood
and watched the orange sun come from under
the cloud and sink into the water would be changed
and he and the summer would be gone forever.

— *Anthony S. Abbott*

Anthony S. Abbott, the winner of the 2015 North Carolina Award for Literature, is the author of seven books of poetry, two novels and four volumes of literary criticism.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

Andrew Sherman is a freelance photographer with an MFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design who specializes in architecture, food, and lifestyle portraits.

Final Concert

Within a sweltering twilight, the omen of autumn:
as when an orchestra sounds a pianissimo chord
in low register, absorbed more than heard, or heard
only in expectancy, our senses poised, awaiting
the downstroke, our breathing not yet unison,
the tremulous quiver of wing as moth settles to leaf,
the sigh of laurel leaf as it receives the moth:

And now the music begins, adagio, sultry, immersive as sunset,
the Festival surrendering to nighttime its sweet season.

— *Fred Chappell*

North Carolina's Poet Laureate from 1997–2000, Fred Chappell has written more than 30 volumes of poetry and prose, and has been awarded the Bollingen Prize, the T.S. Eliot Award the Thomas Wolfe Prize.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM SAYER
Tim Sayer has been documenting the lives and businesses of clients throughout the East Coast for the past 10 years.

Lines to a Toad in a Rose Garden

You're all eyes,
even on the back of your head
and warty as a road.
Brown as the ground
below your leap
beneath roses.
Roses red as song,
pink as a whistle,
yellow as whiskey
and white as wishes.
The air
is all roses
breathing, their petals open
to God and glory and whatever good
comes winging this day.
But Toad is bugging.
He's good at his job; fast and careful.
On time and off, he sees upward,
past roses to his calling
and takes it all
in Toad's time.

— *Ruth Moose*

Ruth Moose recently published Going to Graceland *with St. Andrews Press and is compiling her sixth collection of poetry to be named* Amarylli.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LYNN DONOVAN
Lynn Donovan is a freelance photographer based in Greensboro, N.C.

Summer's Only Child

One of one at home,
my dolls and I play
dress-up games alone.

One of ten with cousins on the farm
for two too-short August weeks,
we play Simon, Rover, Hide and Seek.

They make fun of my city clothes,
but I know where I hang
my summer overalls

to race around the barn,
be first to prime the pump
spill frothy water, fill the metal cup

that's hung there, all alone
for years, like me,
so happy when it shares.

At milking time, we only need
one spoon to skim the cream,
then wipe moustaches on our sleeves.

I sleep with cousin Joyce.
We tell stories about ghosts — so real
we hear them creeping up the stairs.

Then giggling, safe, barely awake,
we wait for sun to rise
behind the rooster weathervane.

I wish the cocky rooster in the yard
were quiet like the vane,
would quit his crow that lets me know

it's time to wear my city clothes again,
go home to one of one,
instead of one of ten.

– *Sarah Edwards*

A retired member of the clergy of the United Church of Christ and a regular contributor to PineStraw, *Sarah Edwards has published two volumes of poetry.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN KOOB GESSNER

Trained in New York City and based in Southern Pines, John Koob Gessner is an innovative photographer who captures images ranging from musicians to architecture.

Raisins -- *for E.L.P*

Having ground up
their final juices of tenderness,
I forgot that all flavor fades:
that decent delight is portioned
by good fortune, or those special folks.

After my grandfather, who re-wrote
the Bible, surrendered his last fistful
of raisins to the black and white goats, I
learned to endure without easy sweetness.
During our last summer,

we re-tarred the coop, burned out wasps.
Between pitchers of sun-brewed tea,
he explained dragonflies and why roses
need each thorn. Late afternoons, a
hewn oak handle churned rock salt into chocolate.
Sickness drained him away. I accept
the fact he drank heavy, and that it killed him.
I lost his New Testament notes, but salvaged
the bifocals from his desk and have protected
them all these years. I refuse to misplace

the imprint of the calloused palm that helped
me straddle the cedar rail of the pasture fence
when we counted wrens fluttering through threads
of sunset under low sourwood branches while the goats
butted and danced in his vineyard's last light.

– *Sam Barbee*
from That Rain We Needed *(Press 53)*

Sam Barbee's poems have appeared in Poetry South, The NC Literary Review, Crucible, Asheville Poetry Review, The Southern Poetry Anthology VII: North Carolina.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK WAGONER

Mark Wagoner is a Greensboro advertising and editorial photographer with more than 40 years of experience working for many of America's Fortune 500 Companies, producing over 100 magazine covers.

Any Summer Day

One summer day forty-five years ago,
my five-year-old son and I walked
down the detergent aisle in the A&P,
the shelves stacked high with Cheer
and Joy, and he squeezed my hand
and asked, "Daddy, why are we here?"

Today I sit in my car at a railroad
crossing as a freight train rumbles
through town, each boxcar adorned
with swirls of paint, words I can't
interpret, codes I can't decipher,
when there appears a simple query
sprayed yellow on an empty coal-car:
"Where are we going?"

Those are the essential questions,
aren't they? The first asked by a child
who's lived more than half a century
and who's now wiser than I, the other
posed by a soul who believes our lives
have an inevitable destination.

The crossing gates rise skyward,
the red lights cease flashing,
and all I can offer is uncertainty.
The last freight car rocks southward:
here we are, there we go.

— *Stephen E. Smith*

Stephen E. Smith is the author of seven books of poetry and prose, the recipient of the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize and the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURA GINGERICH

Laura Gingerich is a freelance photographer known for capturing the moment. When Laura's not on assignment she shares her passion for photography leading workshops near and far.

Singing Tables

A poetic meditation

By Jaki Shelton Green

I'm never cooking alone, even at my most solitary moments. I am surrounded by generations of cooks, their wisdom, laughter, and their flawed and perfect recipes lifting my hands and heart savoring each ingredient as I realize that each ingredient represents all the joys, sorrows, healing and restoration of my life's journey. These unseen hands hold me in passionate surrender to generosity as family and friends gather at my table reminding me that food creates community, holds my sense of identity, and conjures sensory surprises over and over again. The ghosts of other tables, other kitchens remind me that we are all just ingredients, and what matters is the grace with which I cook the meal.

My food odyssey is a soundtrack re-mix like the texture of an autobiography offering a throw-back to prayer-song, dance, birth, death, sex and rock and roll. The backyard chicken coops, vegetable gardens and mini orchards are long gone like my elders and the neighborhood of my childhood. What remains is me . . . the brown woman-child writing down the sizzle of cast iron skillets, the bold of the beet, the hot of the pepper pot, the earthiness of walnuts, the bitter of arugula.

Food helps me to express my past and present. Food helps me to create communal ties and honor my ancestral roots.

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood" – Frances Crosby

My grandmother, Eva White Tate, hosted the Ora Shanklin African Methodist Episcopal Missionary meetings, which gathered monthly on first Monday evenings during the springs and summers of my youth. An agenda of devotions, song, prayer and Scripture segued into Old and New Business, projects to raise money for their many charitable activities, missionary dues, and a "love offering" for the sick. My grandmother, mother and aunts raced around all day preparing food and setting an elegant table for the elaborately coiffed church ladies in their flawless pristine sum-

mer linen, pastels, crepe de chine, patent leather and sexy slingbacks that made ticky-tacky squeals across the glistening, freshly waxed wood floor.

This monthly soiree featured milk glass vases holding peony globes and arrangements of snapdragons, Queen Anne's lace and foxgloves strategically placed on the crisp white linen tablecloth adorning the antique oak dining table, monogrammed linen napkins, and the heirloom silverware that was left to my tiny hands to polish on a monthly basis. I was impressed that the deviled eggs required their own unique platter, designed especially for — deviled eggs. Mounds of homemade chicken salad garnished with apples, pecans and grapes, potato salad, pear walnut salad, canapés of cucumber-dill cream cheese, pimento cheese, stuffed olives, and perfectly browned chicken legs were presented on sparkling crystal and carnival glass serving platters.

The inlaid glass sideboard was majestic with a centerpiece of magnolia, camellia and gardenia blossoms fresh cut from my grandmother's flower garden and hosting cut glass pedestals of scrumptious coconut cake, petit fours, homemade (pink, green, yellow) mints, fresh strawberries, chocolate-covered peanuts, and my grandmother's famous secret recipe egg custard. Pitchers of brewed mint tea and punch bowls bearing icy rainbow sherbet flanked both sides of the dessert display waiting to be admired and devoured by the white-gloved missionaries.

This pageantry of memory continues to feed my upper-crust soul. This pageantry was the backdrop for all the whispered gossips and secrets of uppity church women in between "a piece of this and a little dab of that."

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high
Oh, your daddy's rich and your ma is good looking
So hush little baby, don't you cry." — Dubose Heyward

The smell of coffee brewing, bacon frying and hot biscuits browning were the only summer alarm clocks in our house. The first few weeks following school vacation, my brother and I spent lazy days playing between our house and Aunt Alice's house or hanging out at Uncle Ervin's Service Station pretending to be proprietors behind the counter taking money for gas, candy, milk, bread, but never the cigarettes. That fun would be interrupted when "the garden came in" with lima beans, snap beans, wax beans, okra, peas, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, cantaloupe, cabbage, lettuce, watermelon and corn. The litany from porch to porch throughout the neighborhood addressed to our bored little brown bodies was, "Shut up whining, your little bellies will be glad to get this food come wintertime. Don't put those hulls in that bowl." So we pouted in-between snapping, shucking, peeling and rinsing so the grown folks could can, freeze, stew and preserve.

These were the summers when our "Up South" Northern kin folks took a notion to jump in a car or hop a bus or train and show up unannounced, usually with five or six children in tow. Our family had abundant land and food, so this uncouth behavior never daunted my mom, grandmother and aunts. They knew how to "hold their mouths right" and bring forth their best masks of civility so refined that no one ever read their furious annoyance hidden beneath the labor of love they laid out for two or three weeks presenting daily breakfast, lunch and supper smorgasbords of cured smoked ham and red-eye gravy, scrambled cheese eggs, grits, salmon croquettes, biscuits, bacon, sausage, homemade peach, strawberry, blackberry, pear jelly and preserves, stewed apples, potato cakes, cinnamon rolls and toast. The "guests" would feast and then retreat to the front porch, into the yard, watch television, or return to bed to sleep away their city blues.

With the guests "out of the way," the women folks washed dishes, swept crumbs, cleared the table and talked in hushed ridicule and dismay about their hungry citified relatives. After they caught their breaths and a few of the leftover table scraps, they started the operation for lunch or "just a little something to tide them over," which was usually homemade egg, tuna or chicken salad, the optional ham and cheese sandwich, tossed salad, chilled watermelon and cantaloupe, iced tea and fresh lemonade served outside on the porch.

Fried chicken, fried fish, turnip salad, chicken and dumplings, stewed tomatoes, potato salad, rice pudding, fried okra and squash, pound cake, apple pie and yeast rolls made the "Up South" folks remember where home really was. They never suspected by our good manners how their unannounced visits interrupted our summer explorations, building camps and forts in the woods, fishing, skinny-dipping, catching tadpoles, making June bug whistles, chasing lightning bugs and baking mud-pies all day in the sun.

"If you want to know
Where I'm going
Where I'm going, soon
If anybody ask you
Where I'm going
Where I'm going soon
I'm going up yonder
I'm going up yonder
To be with my Lord" — Tremaine Hawkins

Death often disrupts my family and community. We gather with food because food is the ultimate and final expression of how we love and the culture of our community. Feasting with the dead even now and in my past continues to provide me a way to reconnect and maintain connections with my ancestors and my daughter. My family and extended tribes have never needed a copy of "Being Dead is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral." It's in our blood . . . we know what we know about the power of fried gizzards, leftover meat loaf, turkey necks, fried croakers, okra gumbo and moonshine.

The laying out of the dead and the laying out of the food pulls me closer and closer to that vortex of all things familiar and comfortable. These are forever images imbedded in my mind's rolling video screen of the deaths of my father, grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins and my daughter.

When my precious daughter Imani died, people came with their stories of her life neatly folded in the corners of picnic baskets. They delivered their stories of her whimsy, her sass and her bravado rolled inside a fresh loaf of sourdough bread, slithering across roasted vegetables laced with slow-drizzling balsamic, baked inside a piping hot strawberry rhubarb pie. The stories were alive inside the food. Imani loved food. Imani loved to feed people, so her stories became the food itself ... roasted with superfluous green garlic, cilantro, cumin, basil, a rack of lamb Imani threatened to throw at her brother one Easter, the duck medallions I cooked for the last Christmas meal of her life with us, or the wild salmon steaks she'd hide in the freezer.

What I know that I know is food heals. Food covers the wounded heart. Food holds the raging storm and invites Spirit to the table.

"I will love you anyway
Even if you cannot stay
I think you are the one for me
Here is where you ought to be
I just want to satisfy you
Though you're not mine
I can't deny you
Don't you hear me talking baby?
Love me now or I'll go crazy" — Chaka Khan

Appearance. Taste. Texture. Symbolism. Succulence. The Interaction of Colors. The Dance Behind Oven Doors. Edible Metaphors. Velvety. Heavy Cream. Spice Jars. Simmer. Pan Fry. Cold Wash. Knead. Roll. Curl. Caramelize. Braise. Soak. Stir. Roast. Open Fire. Hot Oil. Blend. Fold. Mortar and Pestle. Pine Nuts. Raspberries. Almonds. Champagne Grapes. Mango Preserves. Muscadines. Tomatoes. Expresso. Le coq au vin. Charred Romaine. Mousse. Rose Water. Artichokes. Truffles. Butter. Candied Ginger. Chocolate. Dirty Rice. Brie. Cherries. Figs. Saffron Threads. Cinnamon. Nutmeg. Chutney. Parfait. Hazelnuts. Orange Peel. Lime Zest. Gar-licky Collards, Ambrosia, Chow Chow. Red Rice. Rosemary Sea Salt.

I love the way these words, sounds and ancient cooking rhythms sing inside my mouth . . . and honey chile' don't forget the Honey.

"If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's house and eat with him. The people who give you their food give you their heart." — Cesar Chavez

I remember the first meal I ever prepared for my husband. Lots of talking and long glances over a table full of lush sensuality. Mango gazpacho. Grilled salmon with a black bean-ginger-garlic glaze. Roasted asparagus. Brussels sprouts, beets, feta and walnuts drizzled with fig balsamic vinaigrette. Basmati rice. Yeast rolls. Arugula salad. Sparkling pear cider. Mixed berries dusted with coriander.

Once upon a time, I prepared a "last supper" for a lover I was kicking to the curb. It seemed best to leave a taste of me on his lips. Filet of beef in puff pastry and Madeira cream sauce. Caramelized shallots, carrots and mushrooms. Roasted lemon-garlic artichokes. Grand Marnier cheesecake.

My first memory of a romantic meal was sharing a tomato sandwich made with tomatoes I'd grown in a small bucket as a child with a little boy visiting my grandmother with his grandparents. I was mesmerized by his seersucker plaid shorts and matching bowtie. Crisp white shirt. White crew socks. White bucks. Magic happened between us when the juicy tomato dripped down his long elegant hands and he slowly licked the essence of my first harvest.

My husband and I love to cook. Our food landscape is forever changing, moving, reinventing itself, but what remains always is "sauce" so rich and soulful that it requires the licking of fingers, eyelids, noses, jelly-roll laughs, and oceans of soft fluttery kisses. Our food adventures continue to awaken our passion . . .

"Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit. 'I said, 'I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.' May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrances of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine. May the wine go straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth. I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me." — Song of Songs 7:7-10

We stroll into each other's perfumed gardens gathering wild honeycomb. Whether dining by candlelight in our intimate dining room or sitting at a makeshift table in the woods with dandelions my love has picked on the way, we savor the bread between us. The anticipation of a romantic meal is oftentimes aphrodisiac enough. We can't stop smiling and casting knowing glances at each other the whole time we are preparing the meal. Late at night I flow through celestial whipped dreamy clouds trailing the scents of rose and lavender as I fold gently into the crevices of pillows stuffed with crushed rosemary*.

*According to ancient scribes, rosemary was a love potion for engaged or married couples, symbolizing remembrance and fidelity.

Poet and teacher Jaki Shelton Green is North Carolina's ninth poet laureate and is the recipient of a Poets Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets.

This piece was previously published in *The Carolina Table: North Carolina Writers on Food* (2016); Eno Publishers.

The Laureates Garden

Where poets and nature meet

By Gwenyfar Rohler • Photographs By Andrew Sherman

Some people have Christmas trees. I have "poet-trees." Literally, poets and poetry hang from the trees in my garden . . . and the trellises, fences. I call it the North Carolina Poet Laureate's Garden of Verse.

If I could tell you anything about my garden it is this: It is a fairy-tale place, for me at least, complete with the discovery of my playhouse, which was hidden beneath years of overgrown brambles, just like Sleeping Beauty's castle, or Mary's secret garden. Last year, I opened Between the Covers: A NC Writer's Bed and Breakfast in my former childhood home. As the name implies, it celebrates North Carolina writers — and one subset of this group that captures my imagination and curiosity is the North Carolina poet laureates.

My house was built around the same time the poet laureate idea was born, the turn of the 20th century. In 1906 John Charles McNeill received the Patterson Cup (the first literary trophy for North Carolina), which was presented to him by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. From then on he was referred to as the poet laureate of North Carolina (it is even inscribed on his tombstone). In the intervening century, both the idea of the poet laureate, and my garden, have grown beyond expectations.

About six years ago, I had an idea that the poems would somehow be incorporated into the garden. But as far as creating this next phase of life for garden and maintaining it — that was something I needed help visualizing and making manifest. Enter Dagmar Cooley of Dagmar's Designs and her amazing team.

This wasn't going to be a project in which we ripped everything out and started from scratch. Preserving the hand-grafted camellias that date to just after World War II was important. Keeping the two pecan trees that the Hoopers (the family that built the house) gave each other as presents one year was essential. So was saving the heritage rose that climbs along the back fence. Yes, we have planted more climbing roses to continue the theme, but that's the one my mother picked flowers from to weave into my hair for my soiree when I was little.

It is a space that is full of surprises. When we first moved into the house, a redbud tree had fallen and was supported by a concrete birdbath. It was tangled around a downed electrical line. The combined health and safety hazards necessitated its swift removal. Last week Cooley showed me the redbud tree that has started growing, over 30 years later, in the same spot. Incorporating the history of the property and the history of literature in our state with a plan to move forward wasn't going to be simple.

"I think you're almost there, Gwenyfar," Cooley mused. "What you really lack is structure." She explained how the garden was really composed of different "rooms." The backyard, particularly, has an unusual shape; it wraps around the side of the house and then takes a weird S-curve around the other side, accommodating a corner lot that was cut out of the property and sold decades ago to create my neighbors' house. The penny dropped: Just like a poem that has a beautiful idea but lacks structure to communicate its main theme, the garden was filled with great ideas but was sort of all over the place.

"When embarking on a journey, it's important to have people that you travel well with and that share a common goal and/or excitement about the excursion," Cooley added. Many of her clients are focused on trying to make their spaces achieve a specific look in the space of one season. So working on this project is a little different. For example, when we began discussing asparagus — which I have tried (and failed) to grow repeatedly — she pointed out that you couldn't harvest it for the first two years.

"I'm going to own this house for almost 100 years; what's a two-year wait?" I shrugged.

Cooley smiled, nodded and arrived the following week with several different varieties of asparagus crowns to plant, including Martha Washington, Purple Passion and Jersey Supreme. That has been a refrain over and over. I waited six years to eat a fig from the fig tree and five to eat blueberries from the garden. Both of those juicy rewards Cooley made possible in the face of some pretty crazy obstacles that include drought, squirrels, birds and hurricanes. In the midst of my quest for an edible and ornamental garden, she has transformed the untamed jungle of memories and ideas into a thing of beauty.

"I have clients that have blueberries, but they aren't sweet at all," Cooley noted between mouthfuls of berries. "I think it's something else that happens here." She smiled. "Part of it is probably the ashes from your fireplace, but I think a lot of it is how much lovin' they get."

Not Just a Simple Group

When I hit on the idea of a Poet Laureate's Garden, it created a variety of logistical issues. The first was how to actually display the poetry and the poets' biographies. I planned to represent each of the laureates with a short biographical sketch and at least two different pieces of poetry on display in the garden. One can overcomplicate things if given enough rope, and I came up with a dozen great but very expensive and difficult ideas before it finally hit me: We had a sublimation printer and a heat press at my bookstore. We use the setup for making coffee mugs, jigsaw puzzles, T-shirts, bandannas and other assorted literary accessories, including … signs! Would it be possible to make signs that would withstand the elements? After a couple of drafts were scrapped we came up with a 5-by-12-inch metal sign that we could put poems and bios on and hang in the garden.

But the North Carolina poet laureates are not a simple group of people to collect in one place. As mentioned, John Charles McNeill was the state's unofficial poet laureate. The post was officially created in 1935, when the North Carolina General Assembly passed

a resolution allowing the governor "to name and appoint some outstanding and distinguished man of letters as poet-laureate for North Carolina." But it took until 1948 for Governor Cherry to get around to appointing Arthur Talmadge Abernathy to be the first official poet laureate.

Abernathy is a bit difficult: He didn't actually publish a poetry collection, although his work appeared widely in newspapers and magazines during his lifetime. His successor, James Larkin Pearson, was appointed poet laureate in 1953 and served until 1981. The largely self-taught Wilks County native wrote poetry that utilizes traditional rhyme scheme and structure. His themes tend to be nature, love and his home. The poem hanging from my crape myrtle tree, "Fifty Acres," is a lovely example. Here are the first two verses:

I've never been to London,
I've never been to Rome;
But on my Fifty Acres
I travel here at home.

The hill that looks upon me
Right here where I was born
Shall be my mighty Jungfrau,
My Alp, my Matterhorn.

Sam Ragan, former editor of *The Pilot* newspaper in Southern Pines, succeeded Pearson and served until his death in 1996. It was actually *Collected Poems of Sam Ragan* that almost got me run over on Third Street. I was so absorbed that I walked out in traffic with my nose in the book. The poem that had endangered me, "A Poet Is Somebody Who Feels," seemed the obvious choice to put in the garden. When I sit on the glider under the pecan tree, I can read it on the camellia I used to call "the peppermint bush" when I was young, due to the beautiful pink stripes on the white flowers.

With the appointment of Fred Chappell as poet laureate in 1997, the office ceased to be a lifetime post. "You have these in your garden," Cooley noted, tracing her finger down the poem "Narcissus and Echo."

"Do you see the other poem contained within it?' I asked, showing her the italicized poem contained within the larger piece. The first part of each line of the poem is in one typeface and the second part is italicized. You can read straight down the column of type on the left, or down the column of italicized font or read all three together. "It's really three poems when you read it. Or is it one?" I mused. What it is, quite simply, is brilliant.

Heralding a New Era

It is no surprise the Fred Chappell heralded a new era for the poet laureate. Not only is his work beautiful, but his very being is committed to making art and literature accessible to as many people as possible in any way possible. During his tenure the poet laureate's position began to change to one of service. Now the poet laureate is North Carolina's literary ambassador, working to promote and develop the arts and poetry throughout the state.

But perhaps the appointment of the first woman to the position of poet laureate by Governor Mike Easley in 2005 was the sign of real changes to come. It seemed appropriate to me to display Kathryn Stripling Beyer next to Jaki Shelton Green, the first poet laureate of color, in our state. Green was appointed in 2018 by Governor Roy Cooper.

Beyers' poem "Diamonds" greets me most mornings when I sit on the back steps and have a coffee break with the dogs while the breakfast for the guests is in the oven. There is usually a 15-20 minute span when the table is set, but the guests are not awake yet. Then I get to visit with Jaki and Kathryn and contemplate the new day in the presence of their greatness.

In the most prominent place I could find in the yard, the spot that everyone will pass entering or leaving the house, I have displayed George Moses Horton.

Beneath his heart-rending poem "George Moses Horton, Myself," a bleeding heart glory bower (*Clerodendrum thomsonine*) curls upward.

George Moses Horton died before the poet laureate mantle was conferred upon John Charles McNeill. Horton was born into slavery and spent much of his life in Chatham County, North Carolina. He would drive a wagon to Chapel Hill to sell produce from the plantation where he lived and began composing poems for the students at the university, who would purchase them. His love poems were especially popular, and one can imagine this enslaved Cyrano de Bergerac creating odes for the lovely young ladies the undergrads admired. This was in the late 1820s and early 1830s. At the time that he was selling his work as a poet, the North Carolina legislature passed a law forbidding slaves to learn to read or write.

Horton had hoped to earn enough money from his work to buy his freedom. However, his emancipation came during the Civil War. Horton subsequently moved to Philadelphia, and his work changed drastically. It would have to: His life had been altered in the most profound of ways.

Horton is one of my literary heroes, and although the state of North Carolina was not prepared to properly honor him during his lifetime (in the last few decades he has posthumously received honors, including a dormitory named after him at UNC, and a state historical marker), I decided, it's my garden, and I can include him if I wish. Frankly, I don't know how I could not. His poem is one of my favorites:

George Moses Horton, Myself

I feel myself in need
Of the inspiring strains of ancient lore,
My heart to lift, my empty mind to feed,
And all the world explore.

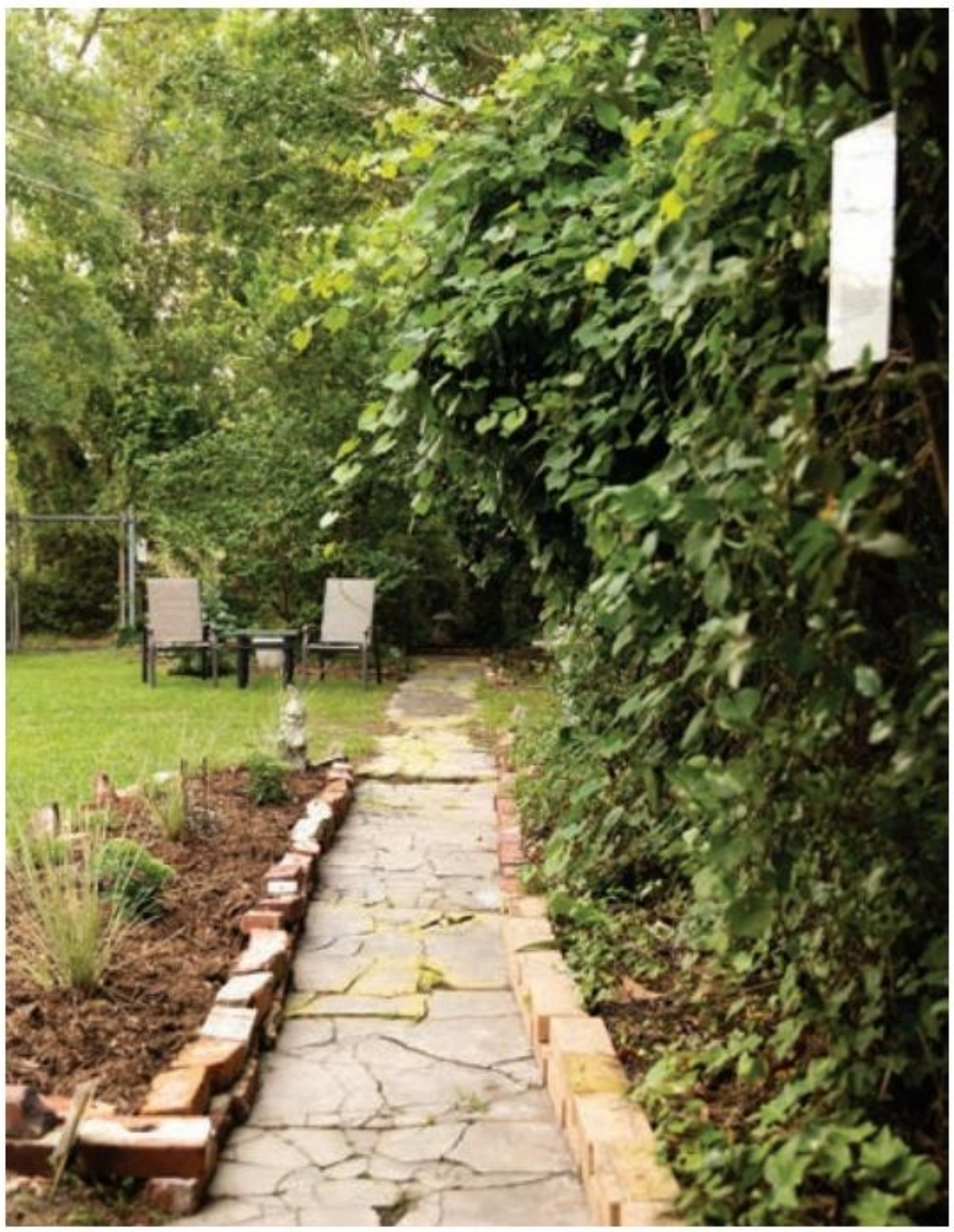
I know that I am old
And never can recover what is past,
But for the future may some light unfold
And soar from ages blast.

I feel resolved to try,
My wish to prove, my calling to pursue,
Or mount up from the earth into the sky,
To show what Heaven can do.

My genius from a boy,
Has fluttered like a bird within my heart;
But could not thus confined her powers employ,
Impatient to depart.

She like a restless bird,
Would spread her wing, her power to be unfurl'd,
And let her songs be loudly heard,
And dart from world to world.cigarettes. That fun would be interrupted when "the garden came

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.



Hog Heaven

A pig picking – down-home and dramatic all at the same time. Invite the neighborhood and ice down plenty of beer

By Jane Lear

When my editor asked me to write about a pig picking — that is, a roasted whole hog and one of the world's epic, roll-up-your-sleeves culinary projects — I realized I would be inviting the sort of controversy that sparks thoughts of witness protection or, at the very least, a pseudonym. As John Shelton Reed and Dale Volberg Reed point out in *Holy Smoke: The Big Book of North Carolina Barbecue*, the problem is that, when it comes to cooking a whole pig, "there are reputable, sometimes renowned, pitmasters who would tell you something different at each and every step. Literally, each and every one." They are not kidding.

The Backstory

"The first pig roasts were occasions for families and communities to get together, and you'll find various renditions all over the world," wrote Jim Auchmutey in the "Foodways" volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. The barbecue tradition of the American South has its roots in the Caribbean, "where Spanish explorers of the early 1500s found islanders roasting fish and game on a framework of sticks they called (in translation) a barbacoa," Auchmutey explained, adding that the first barbecuers were typically African slaves who combined their native methods of roasting meat with expertise picked up in the West Indies.

There are numerous knowledgeable websites (including those of the Southern Foodways Alliance and the North Carolina Barbecue Society) devoted to barbecue, and it's the subject of some great books. Among the favorites in my library are the aforementioned *Holy Smoke* as well as *Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country*, by Lolis Eric Elie, and *Barbecue Crossroads: Notes and Recipes From a Southern Odyssey*, by Robb Walsh. What I'm trying to say is that in the space provided here, all I can do is drive slow and point out a few landmarks.

The Meat

In most of the South, barbecue means pork, and particularly in eastern North Carolina, it means the whole hog. You can order a conventionally raised whole hog from a butcher, but if you prefer eating meat that is raised with the welfare of the animals and the environment in mind (hog farming can be especially brutal to both), you may want to seek out a local sustainable farm, or order from one such as Cane Creek Farm, in Saxapahaw. It's known far and wide as a producer of absolutely delicious pork from pastured heritage breeds:

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN KOOB GESSNER

In other words, those pigs only have one bad day. Cane Creek sells whole hogs for pig pickings, and you'll find all sorts of useful information on their website.

"Whole hog," by the way, doesn't actually mean the entire hog, but one that's been "dressed" — that is, had the feet, tail, and innards removed and the bristles scraped off. Many people prefer to have the head removed as well. Be sure to get the hog with the skin on, though, and ask for it butterflied so you can spread it open on the cooker. Because you may still need to crack the ribs to open the carcass all the way, you may even want to order the pig split down the backbone into halves, which will make it easier to flip. On a practical note, a whole hog is too big for the refrigerator and most coolers, so the most common place to stash it is in the bathtub with lots of ice. Just saying.

The Fuel

In a perfect world, you'd start with half a cord of well-seasoned hardwood logs and burn them down, but about 70 pounds of hardwood lump charcoal is a good compromise. You'll also want lots of water-soaked hardwood chunks to add to the burning coals for smoke. Avoid mesquite; although it's great for Texas-style beef brisket, it's too strong for pork. Instead, choose hickory, oak, a fruitwood such as apple, or a mix.

The Method

The easiest option is to rent a charcoal (not propane) cooker, which you can tow behind a car, or plunk down a chunk of change for a Cuban-style caja china (Chinese box), available at Williams-Sonoma and other online sources. A caja china is simple to use, but although it results in beautifully moist *lechon* pork, you won't get much of a smoky whomp. A spit-roaster is yet another alternative, but again, you're not going to get the smokiness that aficionados crave.

If, however, you're the sort of person who can build a raised garden bed, you may not think twice about knocking together a temporary cinderblock pit. It helps to have a truck-owning friend who owes you one, and a place nearby where you can buy supplies such as a sheet of expanded metal. (Avoid galvanized metal, which can give off toxic fumes.) It's also helpful to have a kettle grill or fire pit to get additional coals working; that way, you can add them to the pit as needed.

"The coals go in a pit and the meat is put more or less directly above them, at some distance (to keep the cooking temperature low)," explain the Reeds. "The meat is kept moist by frequent mopping (basting), and most of the smoke comes from the meat drippings and basting sauce hitting the hot coals (coals produce very little smoke on their own). It's hard to improve on this technique for cooking whole hogs."

The Game Plan

Decide when you want to eat and work backward. Build the pit and lay in supplies a few days ahead. Think about delegating authority for the playlist, beer, snacks and the graveyard shift. As far as the cooking goes, give yourself plenty of leeway; depending on the size of the hog, the Reeds suggest at least 12 and up to 14 hours, start to finish.

The Equipment

One or two large chimney fire starters
An oven thermometer (a remote-read type is nice but not necessary)
A meat thermometer
Heavy gloves (for you and a sidekick)
A squirt bottle of water to control flare-ups
An Eastern North Carolina style barbecue sauce (see below)

The Roasting

There are numerous how-to's online, so I'm not going to take up space here with the nitty-gritty. But here are some handy tips from the Reeds and various other backyard pitmasters.

When shoveling hot coals into the pit, put more under where the thick, slow-cooking hams (hind legs) and shoulders of the hog will be. Check the oven thermometer; the temperature at grill level should reach 225–250 degrees Fahrenheit. Put a half-dozen water-soaked wood chunks where they'll smolder, but not directly under the pig. Then put the pig, skin side up, on the grate and cover.

After a while, start another batch of charcoal. Every half hour, check the temperature of the pit. If it's dropping off, put more hot coals under the shoulders and hams and a couple of hardwood chunks off to the side. Use a shovel to push the dying embers into the middle of the pit to cook the ribs and loin.

After six or seven hours, the hams and shoulders should be looking nicely browned and wrinkled. Stick a meat thermometer in those thick parts — don't touch the bone — and see if the temperature has reached 165 degrees. Keep cooking until it reaches that temperature, even if it takes much longer.

When it reaches 165 degrees, you and a friend don those heavy gloves and gently turn the pig over. You may need a spatula or (clean) shovel to loosen it first. Don't worry if the pig comes apart when you do this. Once the skin side is down, you'll be looking at the ribs. Generously fill the cavity with sauce, and mop the shoulders and hams, too.

Let the meat cook another couple of hours, adding coals and wood as needed, until your meat thermometer reads at least 180 degrees in every part of the animal. The rib and shoulder bones should pull away with no resistance.

The Sauce

This "Old-Time Eastern North Carolina Barbecue Sauce," which appears in the Reeds' *Holy Smoke*, is staggeringly simple. Just mix together 1 gallon cider vinegar, 1 1/3 cups crushed red pepper, 2 tablespoons black pepper, and 1/4 cup coarse salt and let stand for at least 4 hours.

The Payoff

You can serve the cooked pig as is, pig-picking style, so that guests can choose what they like — moist, tender, pale "inside meat" or the dark, smoky, bark-like "outside meat." Don't be surprised if folks don't stray far from the pit, but simply stand around the carcass, picking the meat right off the bones. Or you can chop or pull the meat for a luscious mix of the two, dress it with some remaining sauce, and add in some crunchy cracklings for yet another texture. The traditional way to eat pulled pork is to sandwich it, along with a generous dollop of coleslaw, in a hamburger bun.

The Sides

Pork is the star of any self-respecting pig picking, but you (or the kind souls who volunteered) will feel obligated to round out the feast with side dishes. And although there is absolutely nothing wrong with baked beans out of a can or jumbo bags of barbecue potato chips, upping the drama quotient, so to speak, can be part of the fun.

If you have a kettle grill going for those additional coals, for instance, it's an easy matter to grill corn on the cob. Here's how: Pull back the corn husks but leave them attached at the base of each ear. Remove the corn silk, then put the husks back around the ears. Grill over moderately hot heat, turning frequently, about 10 minutes. Let the corn cool a few minutes, then holding each ear with a kitchen towel, peel back the husk and discard. Serve with mayonnaise blended with a little of the Thai chile sauce called sriracha, the North African chile condiment called harissa, or minced canned chipotles in adobo (all available at supermarkets).

When it comes to potato salad, if you are lucky enough to find honest-to-goodness new (that is, freshly dug) small potatoes, with their thin, delicate skins, at the market or farm stand, there's no reason to camouflage their earthy flavor with mayo and bits of hard-boiled egg. Simmer the spuds in well-salted water until tender, about 15 minutes or so, and cut into quarters when cool to the touch. Drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil and gently toss with finely chopped shallot, chopped fresh thyme leaves (include some thyme flowers if you're harvesting out of the garden) and/or parsley. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

One of the things I learned during my tenure at *Gourmet* magazine is the wonderful affinity watermelon and tomatoes have for one another, and I love the combination to this day. Stir together chunks of seedless watermelon and juicy sun-ripened tomatoes. Add some crumbled feta, chopped cilantro, extra-virgin olive oil, white balsamic vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve on a bed of arugula or watercress or just as is.

You were getting a little concerned that I was going to snub coleslaw, weren't you? Not to worry. Coleslaw, with its coolness and snap, transcends the categories of salad, side, relish, and sandwich

topping with confidence and ease. And as with other age-old dishes, variations abound. Craig Claiborne's coleslaw (see box below) is an homage to the straightforward type you'll find in Goldsboro, and it is hard to beat.

Reality Check

If roasting a whole hog sounds like more than you bargained for, take heart. Especially if you are new to outdoor cooking or can't undertake the considerable investment of time and money, there's no shame in starting with something smaller and more manageable, like a pork shoulder. Specifically, I'm talking about a Boston butt, the meaty upper part of the shoulder that's also called pork butt or butt end of a pork shoulder roast. A bone-in Boston butt usually weighs a good 8 to 10 pounds, and it can be cooked on the grill. Any which way, the result is hog heaven.

Goldsboro Coleslaw

Adapted from *Craig Claiborne's Southern Cooking* (Times Books, 1987)
Serves about 6

The last two ingredients in this recipe — a tiny amount of sugar and cayenne or smoked paprika — are my usual embellishments, but I sometimes include grated carrot as well and/or a drizzle of rice vinegar. For a tangier coleslaw, replace some of the mayo with a dollop of sour cream. When tinkering, don't forget to taste as you go. You can always add more mayo, salt, or cayenne, for instance, but you can't remove them once they've joined the party.

1 small cabbage (about 1 1/2 pounds)
1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
1 cup finely chopped onion
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
A scant 1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)
A pinch of cayenne or Spanish smoked paprika

1. Remove the core of the cabbage and the tough or blemished outer leaves. Cut the head in half and shred fine. There should be about 6 cups. Coarsely chop the shreds and put them into a mixing bowl.

2. Add the mayonnaise, onion, salt, and pepper and toss to blend well. Let the slaw sit about 30 minutes so the cabbage wilts a bit and the flavors have a chance to mingle.

Jane Lear, formerly of Gourmet *magazine and* Martha Stewart Living, *is the editor of* Feed Me, *a quarterly magazine for Long Island food lovers.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

Come Sit a Spell!

In praise of garden benches

By Cheryl Capaldo Traylor

Every garden needs at least one good bench, a place to pause and rest our world-weary souls, and a spot to dream and plan for the future. If it's true that gardens are extensions of our homes, they should provide as much comfort and pleasure as our interior spaces do. Thoreau wrote: "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." I have a similar arrangement in my garden. Three main sitting areas punctuate my backyard: Bill's Bench, the pergola swing, and an eclectic grouping of chairs and benches surrounding the firepit. Each place provides a unique mood and experience as I sit and linger on welcome autumn days.

Solitude

"Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. We need . . . spates of time sitting on park benches, observing the mysterious world of ants and the canopy of treetops," advised Maya Angelou. When I withdraw from my cares, there's a special bench in my garden ready to receive me. I spend a good amount of time sitting on Bill's Bench, given to me by my brother, Bill, before he passed away from pancreatic cancer at 57. "It's your inheritance," he joked. This special bench invites peaceful solitude each morning as I trudge out with coffee at first light. I sit and observe. Carolina wrens shriek, then dart beneath thick kerria shrubs. On chilly mornings, the beloved hymns of white-throated sparrows fill the air. Sometimes I pray. Sometimes I meditate. And sometimes I just doze off to gentle sleep. I nod, the goldenrods around me nod — a choreographed motion that may look like we are in common prayer — until wind chimes sing out, signaling the end of our liturgy. Time to come back to the world of work and mammon.

Friendship

Humans have been lounging in gardens with friends and loved ones for centuries. Sculptures from the seventh century B.C. show King Ashurbanipal, a fearsome warrior and keen gardener, reclining on an ornate couch beside his queen in the Gardens at Nineveh. I don't have an elaborate couch to entertain my guests on, but I do have a pergola swing. While technically not a bench, this suspended seat is large enough to share with a friend. Or two friends, if they are tiny giggly girls wrapped in a thick quilt handmade by your mother — but that's the nostalgic me digressing to a much earlier time. The girls are grown and have long moved out, but the swing still beckons visitors to sit a spell, to chat, even to giggle. I offer red wine on mild autumn afternoons or chilled prosecco on steamier days, often served with a snack like hummus and chips. My guest and I might discuss the symphony or new theater production, our kids, our community, gardens, animals — both domestic and wild. These tête-à-tête meetings with neighbors, or new friends, help knit a community together and establish deeper trust. On a swing, beneath an arbor covered in sweet-scented clematis, we commune.

Society

As the evenings grow colder, more time is spent by the firepit. I pour a heavy measure of Baileys into mugs of coffee and offer them to my guests. Here in the dark is where the world's problems are mulled over, discussed and seemingly solved, depending on the amount of Baileys we go through. Sometimes the night quietens, and we all sit staring into the flames thinking deep existential thoughts that we will eventually share. We do a fair amount of collective worrying about the environment, the state of healthcare, and what the future holds for our children and grandchildren. We discuss politics in our community and the world at large. We are pragmatists who gather around this handmade brick firepit, but we are also optimists. Our greatest accomplishments happen after our informal meetings are over, as we go out into the world to volunteer, teach, peaceful-protest, and create works of art and writing that invite others to think deeper, and perhaps, care more. A fiery ripple effect, of sorts.

Harvest

And what about gardeners who say there's too much to do in the garden to rest or relax on a bench? When seated, they only notice weeds and work. "What a mess of a garden!" they bemoan, and begin pulling stiltgrass and tucking unruly rose stems. What a shame; there will still be time for weeding and pruning. But, now is the time of harvest. A time for receiving many of the best gifts that a garden offers: quiet contemplation, devoted friendships, and moments of communal inspiration and hope.

Praise be; the goldenrods nod. Praise be.

Cheryl Capaldo Traylor is a writer, gardener, reader, and hiker.

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREL HOLDEN

ALMANAC

August

By Ash Alder

"Every apple orchard is haunted," a friend recently offered. "Have you ever noticed? All of them. Day or night."

I considered the statement, the labyrinths of gnarled trees echoing with distant thuds of falling fruit, autumn's electric whisper . . .

"I could see that," I replied.

And yet, having never experienced an orchard in August, when the skin of the earliest apples turns from yellow to green, green to red, the flesh inside from green to white, I wouldn't know for sure. Could only speculate that the ripening of such autumnal offerings in the sweltering heat of late summer is some kind of omen.

Yes, summer is here. Yet the tangles of wild blackberries will vanish in an instant.

There is movement in the periphery. Always. Perhaps there is something haunting about that.

Flower Mandala

In August, when roadside ditches brim with late summer wildflowers — sweet pea and yarrow and swamp milkweed — pull over.

If you travel with water and a makeshift vase for occasions such as this, handpick a small arrangement for an instant boost in spirit.

And if you're feeling inspired, dream bigger.

Last year, an hour before sunset, a gardener friend and I met at a favorite climbing tree by a nearby lake to design a flower mandala for the simple joy of creation. I brought a modest handful of black-eyed Susans, some amethyst, a single sunflower. She brought a garden: purple clover, coleus, woolflower, Queen Anne's lace, fern, walnut, sycamore leaves, and at least a handful of miscellaneous beauties rich in color and texture.

Ancient tools for meditation, mandalas are believed to represent the cosmos, radial designs that guide the creator toward a sense of inner harmony and the essence of his or her own soul.

Ours led us to a space of absolute wonder, and as the final fireflies of summer began dancing among the boughs of our beloved tree, we noticed a small group of passersby that had quietly gathered to enjoy our nature installation — two spirals joined by an unbroken thread of leaves and petals.

We are all so intricately connected. When you follow the simple callings of your heart, no telling how you will color the world.

Bring on the Magic

Among our late summer bloomers: bee balm, a showy yet rugged perennial that blossoms red, pink or lavender. Also called horsemint, Oswego tea and bergamot, its fragrant leaves add notes of citrus and spice to any garden. What's best? Hummers, bees and butterflies find the flower simply irresistible.

A member of the mint family, bee balm grows best (and spreads!) in full sun. Add its colorful flowers to your summer salad, dry its leaves for tea, and above all, know that your balm is a sweet, tasty tonic for a band of local pollinators.

It is remarkable how closely the history of the apple tree is connected with that of man.
— Henry David Thoreau

Spoonful of Sugar Water

A friend recently shared with me a *Newsroom 24* article from 2018 that states that without bees, we wouldn't be alive. "If bees were to disappear from the face of the Earth, says David Attenborough, voice of *The Blue Planet* and *Planet Earth*, humans would have just four years to live. He suggests leaving a teaspoon of sugar water in your garden to help energy-depleted bees make it back to the hive. "Simply mix two tablespoons of white, granulated sugar with one tablespoon of water, and place on a spoon for the bee to reach," says Attenborough. In so many words: Save the bees, save humanity.

Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability. — Sam Keen

The Night Sky

This year, our beloved Perseid meteor shower occurs just two days before the full Sturgeon Moon, creating less than optimal viewing conditions for the annual display of up to 90 shooting stars per hour.

That said, just before dawn on Tuesday, Aug. 13, the moon will set, gifting us with an hour of darkness — a blessed chance to catch a glimpse of the magic.

Arts Calendar

Astronomy Program

8/3

O'Neill Sweetwater Pro Am Surf Fest

8/16-18

43rd Annual North Carolina Shell Show

8/23-25

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

8/1 Sounds of Summer Concert

6:30-8 p.m. Dance and party band Uptown Easy will perform at part of the Sounds of Summer Concert series. Bring your picnic, blankets and lawn chairs. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 321 Causeway Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-7925 or uptowneasy.com.

8/2 Airlie Gardens Concert Series

6-8 p.m. Tonight's concert features Massive Grass, a local bluegrass ensemble. Admission: $3-10. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 79807000 or airliegardens.org.

8/2 Stephen Marley in Concert

7 p.m. Blue Bus Entertainment presents Stephen Marley in concert. Admission: $34. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/2-3 Clue: The Musical

7 p.m. TheatreNOW's dinner theater performance of *Clue:The Musical*, an interactive version of the murder-mystery-themed board game. Tickets: $22-$52. TheatreNOW, 19. S. 10th St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 399-3669.

8/3 Astronomy Program

8 p.m. Carolina Beach State Park is the setting for the Cape Fear Astronomical Society's Astronomy Program. Telescopes will be set up for viewing in the night skies. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach State Park, 1010 State Park Road, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8206

8/3 Isley Brothers 60th Anniversary Tour

7:30 p.m. Cape Fear Stage presents the 60th anniversary tour of this legendary musical group. Admission: $40-$99. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/the-isley-brothers.

8/4 Summer Sizzler 10K and 5K

7:30 a.m. The Summer Sizzler 10K and 5K follows a route from the Greenfield Lane Amphitheater through the park. Proceeds benefit New Hanover Regional Medical Center's Pink Ribbon Project. Admission: $30-$35. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For info: 5starraceproductions.com/races/summer-sizzler-10k-5k.

8/4 Old Baldy Run for the Light

6 p.m. The Run for the Light course is a scenic run through the maritime forest of Bald Head Island. There will be timed 10K and 5K courses as well a 1-mile untimed run. Proceeds benefit the Old Baldy Foundation. Admission: $35-$72. Old Baldy Lighthouse, 101 Lighthouse Wynd, Bald Head Island. For info: its-go-time.com/run-for-the-light/.

8/4 Breakfast With the Birds

10 a.m. Join Wilmington Water Tours on this 90-minute morning birding excursion down the Cape Fear River. Continental breakfast is served. Admission: $26. Wilmington Water Tours, 212 S. Water St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 338-3134.

8/5-7 The Last Black Man in San Francisco

7 p.m.; additional 4 p.m. screening on 8/6. WHQR and Cinematique present the acclaimed documentary drama film *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*. Cinematique at Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1640 or thalianhall.org.

8/6 Gin Blossoms in Concert

6 p.m. Come hear the Gin Blossoms perform their entire 1992 multi-platinum album *New Miserable Experience*. Doors open 5 p.m. Kids under 11 are admitted free. Admission: $30-$35. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/6 Walking Tour of the Carolina Beach Boardwalk

10 a.m. Members of the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will lead a tour of the Carolina Beach Boardwalk, including the birthplace of the shag, Britt's Donuts, and other local spots. Donation: $10. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Carolina Beach Ave. South, Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 458-0502 or pleasureislandnc.org.

8/7 Family Paint Night

6 p.m-8 p.m. Instructors from Saltwater Surf Art will be on hand for Family Paint Night, a program for children 8 and older. Paints and canvas included. Admission:$45. North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 772-0500 or ncaquariums.com.

8/8 Jazz at the Mansion

6:30-8 p.m. The Bellamy Mansion Museum presents Jazz at the Mansion with the Ariel Pocock Group. Lawn chairs and blankets welcome. Beer, wine and snacks available for purchase. Admission: $10-$18. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or bellamymansion.org.

8/9 An Evening of Magic With Ken Norris Featuring Ashley Straud

7 p.m.-9 p.m. A mysterious evening of comedy and magic. Admission: $10. Leland Cultural Arts Center, 1212 Magnolia Village Way, Leland. Info: (910) 385-9891 or townofleland.com.

8/9 Artistry in Jazz Concert

7 p.m.-9 p.m. Artistry in Jazz is an ensemble of 21 musicians and a vocalist performing the jazz works of Stan Kenton. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Blvd., Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 686-7451 or artistryinjazz.net.

8/10 Third Annual Thunder Roll

1 p.m. and 3 p.m. The Thunder Roll is an antique sound-effect machine that imitates the sound of a thunderstorm — an effect that is believed to be unique to Thalian Hall. Admission: Free. Thalian Hall, 301 Chestnut St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

8/11 Life Rolls On

7 a.m. Life Rolls On is a foundation dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. Come join the group for an Adaptive Surf Clinic. Admission: Free. 2 Carolina Beach Ave. North, Carolina Beach. For info: liferollson.org/northcarolina.

THALIAN ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY THEATRE

URINETOWN
THE MUSICAL

Music and Lyrics by Mark Hollmann Book and Lyrics by Greg Kotis

Directed by Patrick Basquill
Choreographed by Laura Brogdon-Primavera

August 15—25, 2019

Thur–Sat at 7:30 pm | Sun at 3:00 pm

YOU GOTTA GO!

2nd Street Stage at the Community Arts Center
120 South 2nd Street, Wilmington NC 28401
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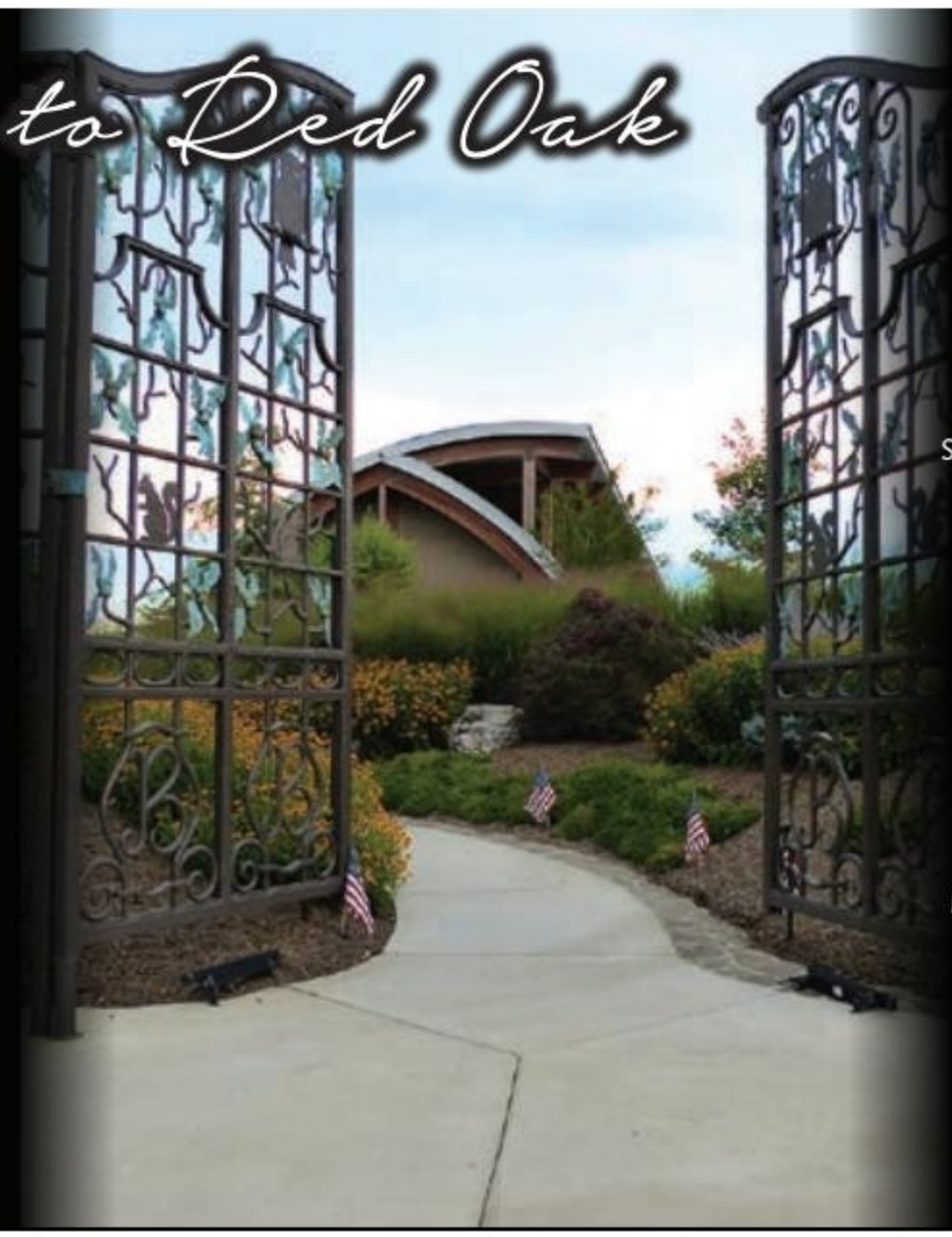

AUGUST HAPPENINGS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10
PINTS & PAINTS 7:00

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11
YOGA 2:00

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15
O HENRY STORY SLAM 7:00

MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO SPEND LABOR DAY AT RED OAK!

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MUSIC BINGO AT 7:00PM

THURSDAY NIGHTS
WINE SPECIALS

FRIDAYS
BREWERY TOUR AT 4:30PM

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SATURDAY 1 - 10PM
SUNDAY 1 - 7PM

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8/11 — **Before the Civil War Cruise**

9 a.m.-12. p.m. Historian and author Dr. Chris Fonvielle will discuss early explorers of North Carolina, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the Battle of Wilmington in 1865. Admission: $50. Wilmington Water Tours, 212 S. Water St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 338-3134 or wilmingtonwatertours.net.

8/12 — **Pam Toll Art Exhibition**

Admission: Free. Wilma Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 362-7808 or cfcc.edu.

8/13 — **Contra Dance**

7:30 p.m. The Cape Fear Contra Dancers host an evening of English, Irish and Scottish country dancing. Beginners are welcome. Admission: $5. Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church, 409 S. Fifth Ave., Wilmington. For info: (910) 763-2621 or 5thaveumc.com.

8/14-18 — **Men on Boats**

8 p.m.; Sunday matinee at 3 p.m. Cape Fear Playhouse presents the play *Men on Boats*, based on a true story of an 1869 Grand Canyon expedition with a group of explorers who set out to chart the course of the Colorado River. All-female cast. Admission: $15-$25. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle St., Wilmington. For info: bigdawgproductions.org.

8/15-18 — **Urinetown: The Musical**

7:30 p.m. Thalian Association presents *Urinetown: The Musical*, a satirical comedy that pokes fun at politics, capitalism and social irresponsibility in the 1990s. Admission: $21-$26. Community Arts Center, 120 S. Second St., Wilmington. For info: wilmingtoncommunityarts.org.

8/16 — **Woodstock Party**

8 p.m. to 2 a.m. A celebration of the iconic rock concert of 50 years ago, featuring DJ Curtis T spinning the music. Juggling Gypsy Cafe, 1612 Castle St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 763-2223 or jugglinggypsy.com.

8/16 — **Airlie Summer Concert Series**

6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Tonight's concert features the soulful pop sounds of North Carolina singer/songwriter Bibis Ellison. Admission: $3-$10. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or airliegardens.org.

8/16-18 — **O'Neill Sweetwater Pro Am Surf Fest**

8 a.m.- 4p.m. The O'Neill/Sweetwater Pro Am is one of the East Coast's biggest surfing competitions. Admission: Free. Birmingham Street, Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 256-3821 or sweetwatersurfshop.com.

8/19 — **Jack Fryar Lecture**

7:30 p.m. Local teacher and historian Jack Fryar will give a talk this evening about the history of the original Charles Town in Brunswick County. Admission: Free. Federal Point History Center, 1121 N. Lake Park Blvd., Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 458-0502 or federalpointhistory.org.

8/20 — **Common in Concert**

7 p.m. Blue Bus Entertainment presents Common in Concert, with opening act Mumu Fresh. Admission: $40-$179. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/22 — **Battleship 101**

10 a.m. Battleship 101 is a great opportunity to tour the battleship in detail, with volunteers available to discuss specific topics including radar, gunnery and engineering. Visitors can raise signal flags and send Morse Code messages, among other activities. Admission: $6-$10. Battleship North Carolina, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 251-5797 or battleshipnc.com.

8/23-25 — **43rd Annual North Carolina Shell Show**

Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. This event attracts shell lovers from throughout the state and has something for everyone — from casual collectors to naturalists and malacologists. Admission: $4. Coastline Convention & Event Center, 501 Nutt St., Wilmington.

For info: (336) 693-4492 or ncshellclub.com.

8/24 **Wilmington Fur Ball**

6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. The 14th annual Wilmington Fur Ball's theme is Roaring Twenties Speakeasy. Tickets: $100. The Terraces on Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. For info: wilmingtonfurball.com.

8/24 **Last Chance for White Pants Gala**

7 p.m.-12 a.m. Celebrate the end of summer at the Last Chance for White Pants Gala, a party to benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice. Tickets begin at $150. Audi Cape Fear, 255 Old Eastwood Road, Wilmington. For info: lcfh.org/event/2019-last-chance-for-white-pants-gala.

8/24-25 **Wrightsville Beach Wahine Classic**

8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. The Wahine Classic is open to all levels of amateur and professional female surfers, ages 5 to 65. There is also an SUP division. Best viewing spots: Wrightsville Beach Public Access 37 and 38. Awards ceremony is 3 p.m. on Sunday. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach (South End), Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 465-9638 or wahineclassic.com.

8/25 **23rd Annual Lumina Daze**

6 p.m.-9 p.m. Dance the night away to the music of Wilmington Big Band, the Dixieland All-Stars, and The Imitations. Tickets: $35-$45. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wilmington. For info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday **Wrightsville Farmers Market**

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Tuesday **Wine Tasting**

6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglass.com.

Tuesday **Cape Fear Blues Jam**

8 p.m. A night of live music performed by the area's best blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join in the fun. Admission: Free. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Ave., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday **Free Wine Tasting at Sweet n Savory Cafe**

5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sample delicious wines for free. Pair them with a meal, dessert or appetizer and learn more about the wines of the world. Live music starts at 7. Admission: Free. Sweet n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.swetnsavorycafe.com.

Wednesday **Weekly Exhibition Tours**

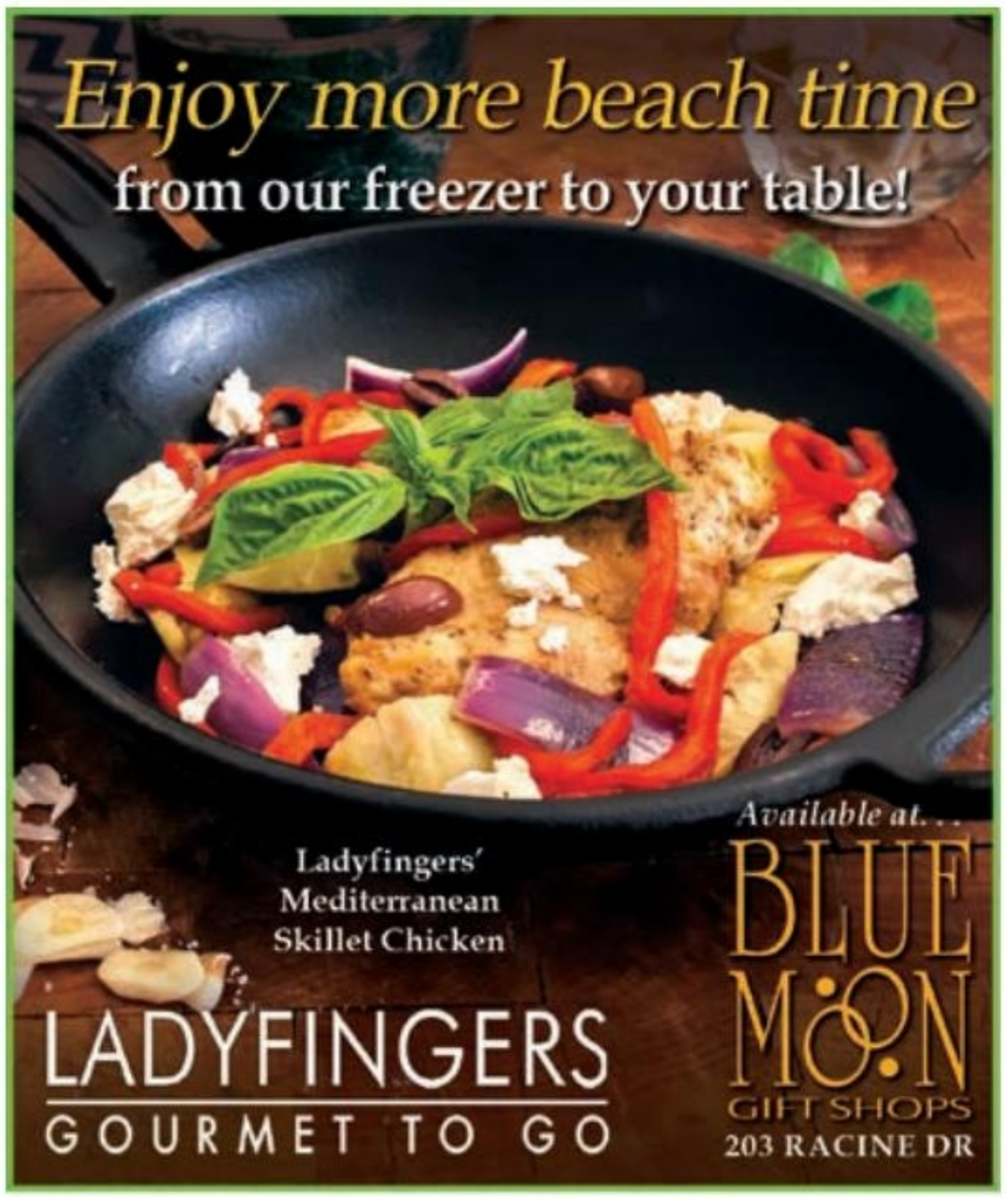
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

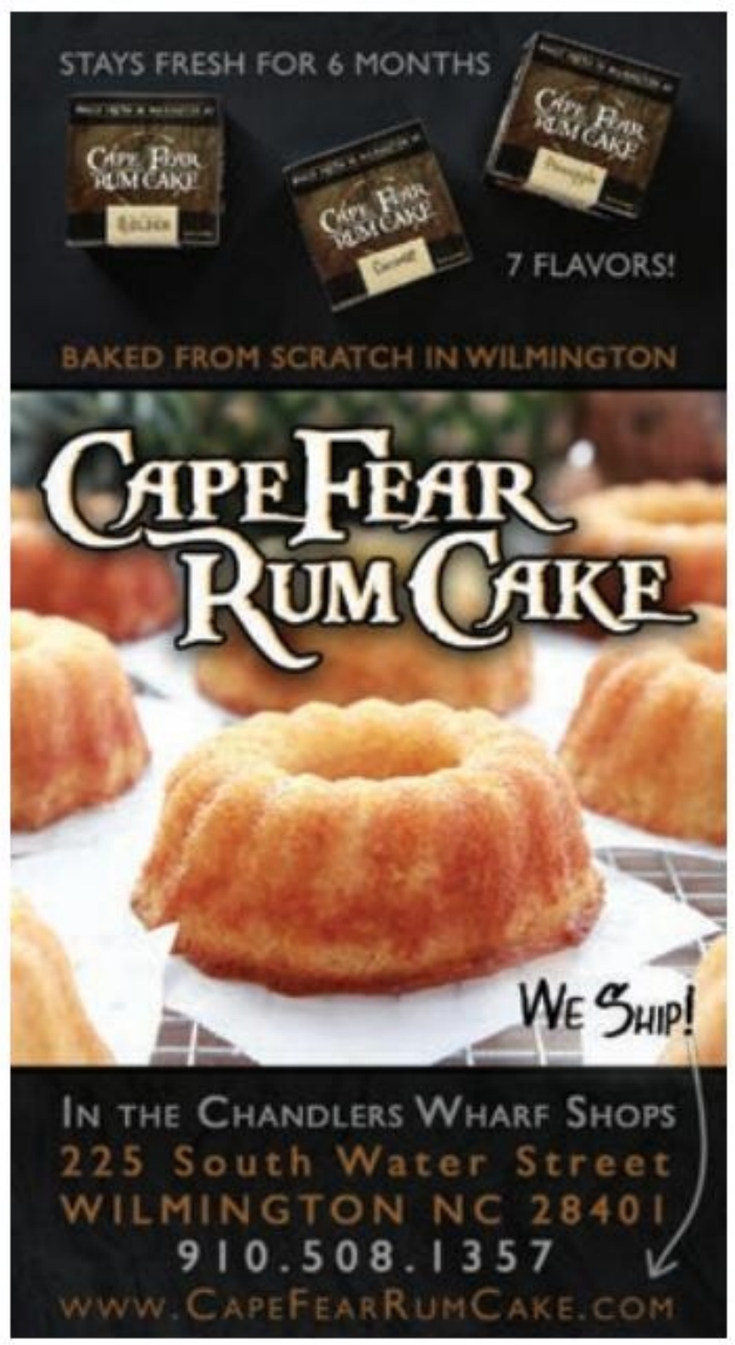
Wednesday **Ogden Farmers Market**

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Wednesday **Poplar Grove Farmers' Market**

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North,





Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday — **Wrightsville Beach Brewery Farmers Market**

2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Come support local farmers and artisans every Thursday afternoon in the beer garden at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Shop for eggs, veggies, meat, honey and handmade crafts while enjoying one of the Brewery's tasty beers. Stay for live music afterward. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Brewery, 6201 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-4938 or www.wbbeer.com.

Thursday — **Yoga at the CAM**

12 – 1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to both beginners and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday & Saturday — **Cape Fear Museum Little Explorers**

10 a.m. Meet your friends in Museum Park for fun, hands-on activities! Enjoy interactive circle time, conduct exciting experiments, and play games related to a weekly theme. Perfect for children ages 3 to 6 and their adult helpers. Admission: Free. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4370 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

Friday & Saturday — **Blackwater Adventure Tours**

Join in an educational guided boat tour from downtown Wilmington to River Bluffs, exploring the mysterious beauty of the Northeast Cape Fear River. See website for schedule. River Bluffs, 1100 Chair Road, Castle Hayne. Info: (910) 623-5015 or www.riverbluffsliving.com.

Saturday — **Carolina Beach Farmers Market**

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, wines, meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2977 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday — **Wilmington Farmers Market at Tidal Creek**

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Weekly gathering of vetted vendors with fresh produce straight from the farm. Sign up for the weekly newsletter for advanced news of the coming weekend's harvest. 5329 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: thewilmingtonfarmersmarket.com.

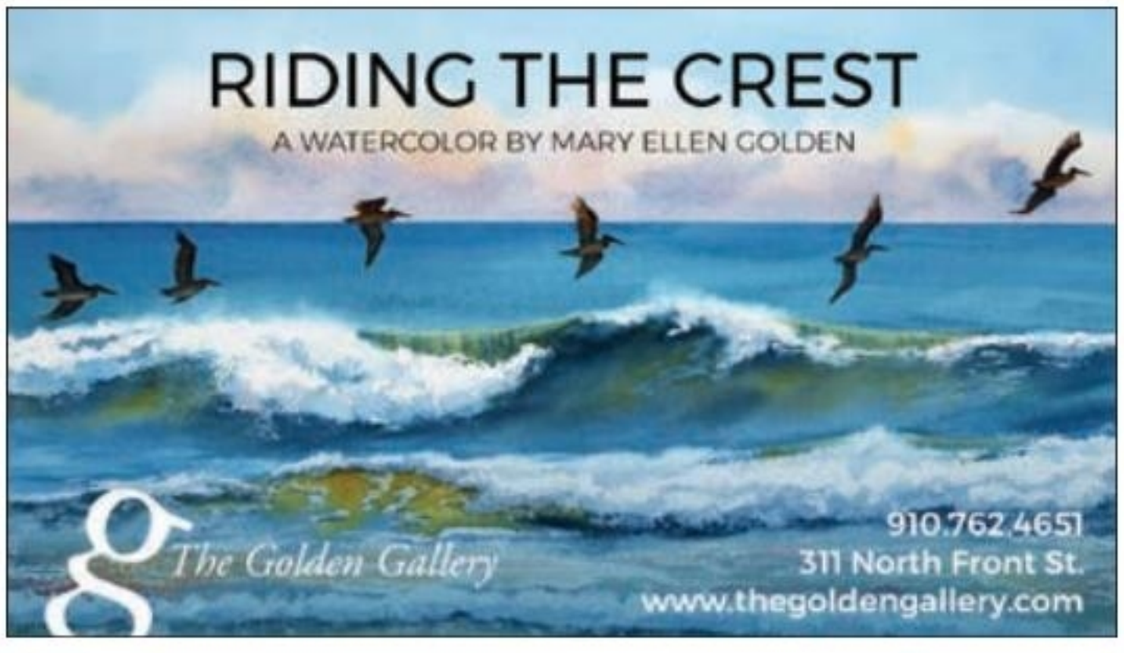
Saturday — **Riverfront Farmers Market**

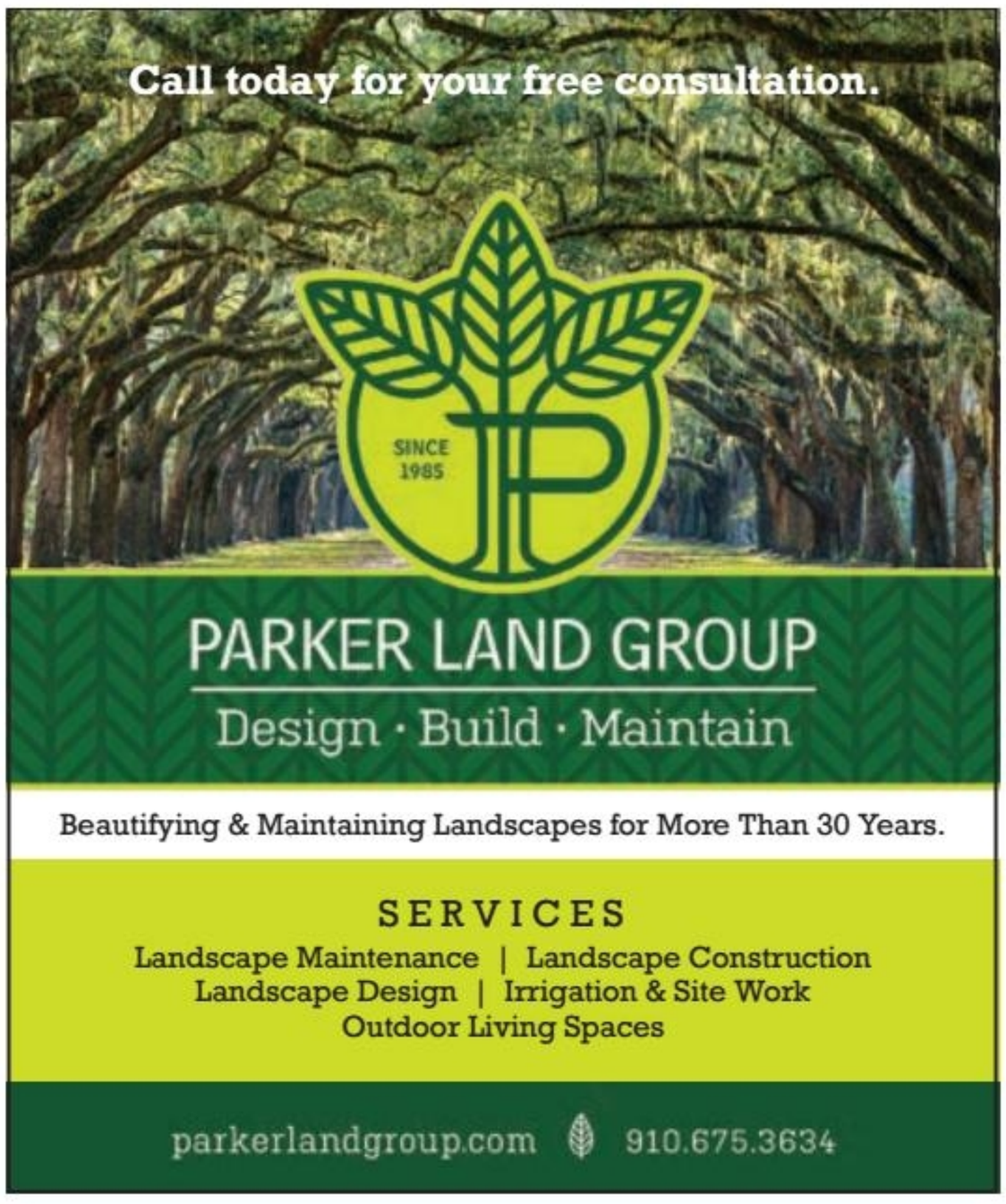
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Saturday — **Taste of Downtown Wilmington**

2:15 p.m., 2:45 p.m., & 3:15 p.m. A weekly gourmet food tour by Taste Carolina, featuring some of downtown Wilmington's best restaurants. Each time slot showcases different food. See website for details. Admission: $55–75. Riverwalk at Market St., 0 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (919) 237-2254 or www.tastecarolina.net/wilmington/.

BRING IT DOWNTOWN





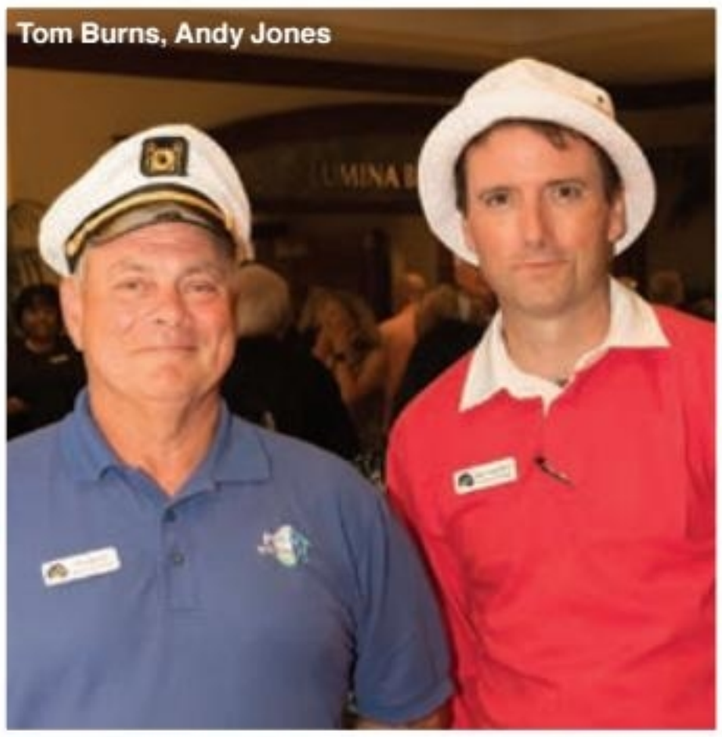
Port City People

"Anchors Away Soiree"

WARM Raise the Roof Gala & Auction

Friday, May 31, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour


Tom Burns, Andy Jones

Sheila & Jon Evans

Greg & Amanda Connor, Melissa & Kenny Woodruff

Michele Gowdy, Joe Finley

Rene Vilain, Jane Murray, Cathy Casey

Kenneth & Kelli Adcox, Cindy & Robin Toone

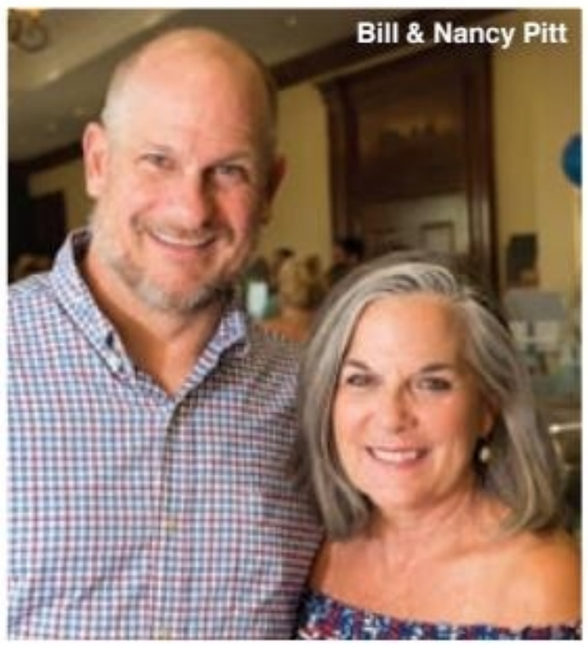
Matt & Laura Mabe, Amber & Brendell Smith

Jeannette Woodruff, Devin Warren, Dori Bishara

Page Inman, Patty & Mark Vernon

Britton, Chris, Lisa & Ada Hood

Amy Caperna, Liz Myers, Tania Hollingsworth


Bill & Nancy Pitt

Port City People

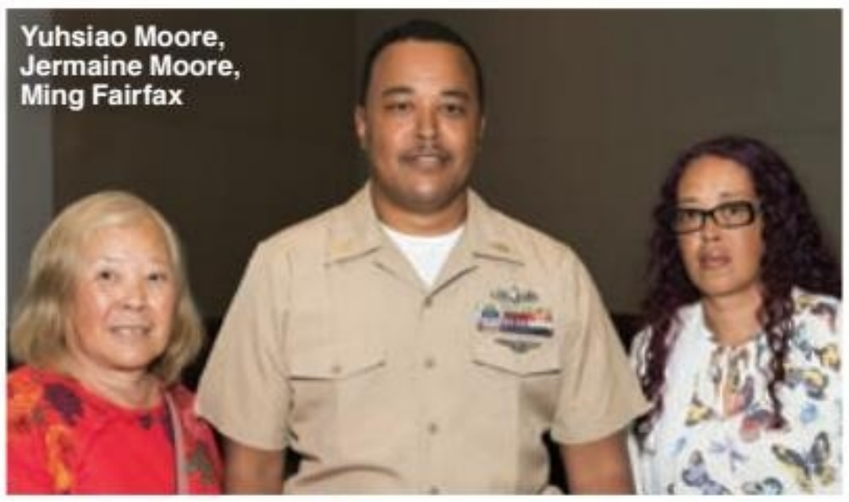
7th Annual "Day in the Life" Luncheon

Benefiting A Safe Place

Thursday, June 6, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Claudia Thompson, Jessica Oester


Yuhsiao Moore, Jermaine Moore, Ming Fairfax

Kyle Van Zandt, Kailyn Johnston

Molly Johnson, Zoe Messina

Molly Johnson, L.T. & Joy Hines

Lindsey Robertson, Ben David

Vicky Milam, Debra Wallin, Amy Aldridge, Melissa Dunn, Sharon Laney, Tara Stewart

Denise Kenny, Jen Peterken

Dawn Mann, Emily Gore, Molly Johnson, MaLisa Umstead, Vic Roberts, Blair Kutrow, Dr. Jessica Whitney

Chanel Dixon, Molly Delaney, Cary Ramsey, Morgan Kauffman, MaLisa Umpstead, Dawn Mann, Corey Andolfi, Olivia Adkins, Ambere Pyland, Chianti Johnson

Molly Johnson, Robert Tate

Port City People

Jazz at the Mansion

Bellamy Mansion

Friday, June 13, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Roger Cook, Jen Carlin

Don Di Giulian, Angelo Galeoitti

Taylor Lee

Betty Pierce, Simone Allen

Gary Ellis, Patty Zwemke

El Jaye Johnson

Louis & Barbara St. Peter

Primus Robinson, Daphne Holmes

Deborah Love, Kirk Sutton

Sheila & Manny Santos

Jo Anne & Bill Stevenson, Barbara & Obataiye Akinole, Daphne Holmes

Port City People

July 4th Parade at Figure 8 Island

Wilmington, NC

Thursday, July 4, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

By Jupiter!

The large, jolly-old-elf planet moves direct from its retrograde phase, bearing gifts along the way

By Astrid Stellanova

Four months ago in April, Jupiter went retrograde. On August 11, Jupiter is going direct. This means (stellar Star Children that y'all are) that you can finally put to good use the knowledge you've been saving up for God-knows-how-long, but definitely too long. Mid-August, the full moon is in Aquarius. Dance on fertile ground and allow that psychic energy to rise up in you from your tippy toes. Meanwhile, don't settle for humdrum but spice it up — douse them collard greens with peppers and vinegar!

Leo (July 23-August 22)
A tub of the world's finest cellulite cream won't straighten out the wrinkles from last month's fiasco when your vanity got the better of you. A sweet-talking somebody sold you on a ridiculous number of superficial fixes. (Not literally, Sugar, the metaphorical kind.) What you really crave and need is straight talk. Learn to fight desperation with hope that ain't found in a jar. Besides, a blind mule ain't afraid of darkness.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
You're a creative spitfire, known to let the pot boil over when you are in the middle of a project. Virgo season begins August 23, and that will signify a season of planning and cogitating. Give your sensitive self the time to reach those who matter.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
You wiggled around an issue like a worm in hot ashes. Now get a grip, because you are so whizbang amazing at so many things you seem to fixate on those teensy things you aren't good at. Sweet thing, move into the big picture stage of your life.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
Sulking and bitching are bad enough when you're a teenager, but down-right unattractive when you're middle-aged. Don't bother your besties unless you are on fire. Fergoddsakes give them a break. Buy 'em coffee, wine, whatever. Period.

Sagittarius (November 2–December 21)
You went all Jesus, judgment and cheetah print when under pressure. Back up and clean it up and say you're sorry. If you can somehow remedy that situation, then you deserve a gold star. The next lesson is learning grace when things are going well.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
This month may feel like a repeat of when you spilled sweet tea all over the place and it was noticed. The good news is your devoted friends just rolled their eyeballs. Now you get to return the favor when someone else spills something all over the place.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Sugar bun, the full moon on the 15th is like magic time for you and the causes dearest to you. Use the light of the big, round orb to guide you and your steps. You have the platform to help those poor Muggles who don't have your super powers.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Is there a loud, louder, loudest dog barking? Any signs of guilt you've over-looked? Be perceptive. Not to say jump to conclusions, just be aware. Late this month is a second full moon, which may give you surprising powers and light.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
You're in for a spell of unexpected events, which is a lot like saying it's hotter than hell in Texas. Aries born are born for the unexpected, which you will take to like a wizard to a wand. Fried okra and Jesus may figure into this month's events.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
If you practice and repeat your newfound skills, you have opportunities open that you have never experienced. The question is, will you, or is it irresistible to you to break wind in the spiritual elevator and pretend you didn't?

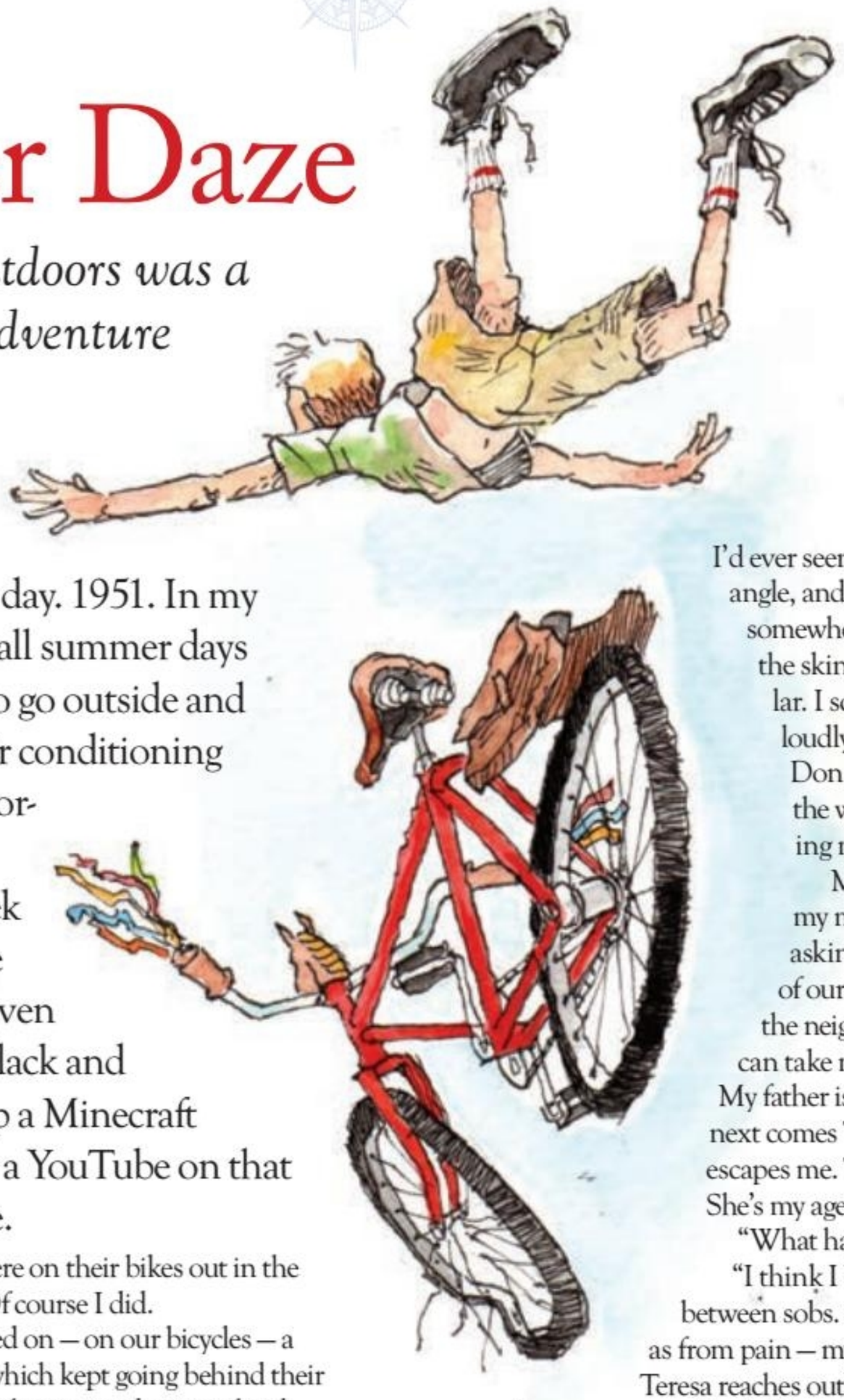
Gemini (May 21–June 20)
There's you, elbowing your way ahead, whether it's a 75 percent-off sale or a spiritual crusade. Sugar, sometimes your ambition isn't just blind — it is plain wrong. Bite back that impulse to power to the front and give somebody else an (unbitten) hand.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Now that you have survived a down-to-the-wire scary time, you look worse than death on a saltine cracker. Take care of yourself, put your face back on, pull up your britches and take a respite. Remember, you can almost always disarm with charm.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Summer Daze

When being outdoors was a terrifying adventure



By Clyde Edgerton

It was a hot summer day. 1951. In my memories of my seventh year, all summer days were hot ones, calling for me to go outside and get into them. There was no air conditioning yet in any home in our neighborhood, so there were no cool, enticing places except by a creek in the woods. You wouldn't be caught dead inside a house — even looking at the little Emerson black and white TV. You couldn't pull up a Minecraft adventure, or a video game, or a YouTube on that little machine. Life was outside.

Don Mitchell and Norris Campbell were on their bikes out in the yard. Did I want to go see a dead snake? Of course I did.

We were off, down the dirt road we lived on — on our bicycles — a right turn into the Goodwins' driveway, which kept going behind their house, straight ahead on through the church graveyard, onto school grounds, by the ballfield, and on to a less familiar place down behind the school. They were in the lead, we were pedaling right along.

My Roy Rogers bike (Roy was a cowboy movie star back then) had a saddlebag like a horse and a small molded head of Roy's horse, Trigger, between the handle bars. (Bumping along on my bike, I could never have dreamed nor been persuaded that Roy Rogers would one day be unknown to most anyone alive.) Don veered slightly to the left around a large, ground-level square of cement; Norris veered right. I saw no reason to avoid it — it was about the size of a room. I didn't notice that a deep ditch filled with growing green grass was around the perimeter of the cement.

The bike's front wheel dropped into the ditch, the bike stopped, I kept going, my hands out in front of me. When I gained some sense of where I was, I was sitting on the cement, staring at my right hand. Where the thumb connects to the hand looked like no thumb joint I'd ever seen; the thumb was off at an angle, and a bone was pushing up from somewhere, but not breaking through the skin; it looked absurdly irregular. I screamed and started crying loudly. I have a vague sense that Don and Norris were with me all the way home, one of them pushing my bike.

My next clear memory is of my mother staring at my hand, asking me to sit on the front steps of our house, while she goes into the neighborhood to find a car so she can take me to the emergency room. My father is at work with our car. And next comes Teresa . . . oh gosh, last name escapes me. Teresa stands before me. She's my age.

"What happened?" she asks.

"I think I broke my thumb," I say, between sobs. I'm crying from fear as much as from pain — my thumb is deformed.

Teresa reaches out and gently takes my arm, turns it so she can get a good look. She announces: "They might have to take it off."

Those words seared me — are still seared into my memory.

I tell the story above because it's a story. And because it happened in my childhood — outdoors. These days, I drive through neighborhoods and I often see no children out of doors on bikes. Maybe I'm in the wrong neighborhood. Maybe I'm in the wrong town. Maybe I'm in the wrong century.

A careful parent, or a glazed-eyed teenager, might say, "You don't get hurt when you stay inside."

Yes, you do.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR

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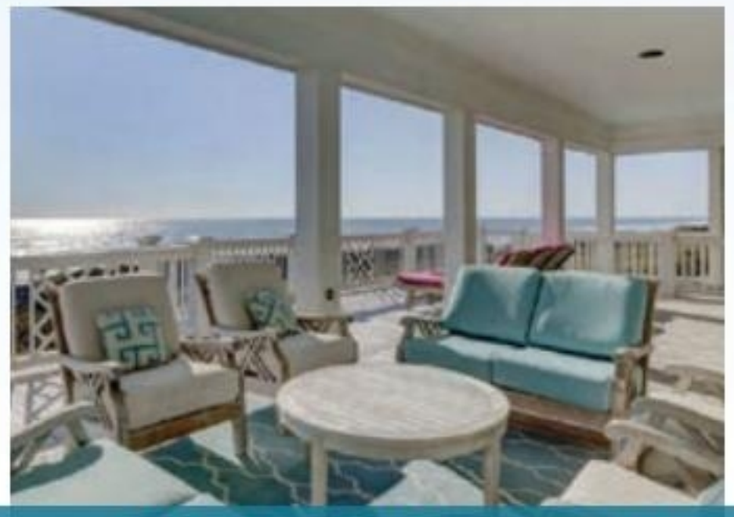

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